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LOS ANGELES

H L Barlow the gift  
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*We had already made some progress, when suddenly the foremost of our party lost his balance and fell to the bottom of the abyss—*

*See page 66.*

# EIGHT EVENINGS

AT

## SCHOOL.

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BY EDITH DYMOND.

---

Come Evening, once again, season of peace;  
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!

*Cowper.*

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LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HARVEY AND DARTON,  
GRACECHURCH STREET,  
AND BY S. WILKIN, HAYMARKET, NORWICH.

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1825.

EIGHT EVENINGS

SCHOOL

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.



THE works which have furnished the Author with materials for the following Conversations, besides those noticed in the course of the different Evenings, have principally been, “ Waring’s Traveller’s Fire-side,” “ Rapin’s and Goldsmith’s Histories of England,” and “ Stackhouse’s Ancient and Pagan Britain.”

*Ipswich,*

1824.

## INTRODUCTION.

---

A GENTLE tap was heard at the parlour door;—"Come in," was the reply.

The door was opened, and a lively little girl entering, laid a note upon the table, and quickly disappeared. Upon its perusal, the contents were found to be these:

"The happy group of school-  
" girls surrounding their play-room  
" table ask permission to remain up  
" a quarter of an hour beyond the  
" usual time. They are very busily  
" engaged at their different amuse-  
" ments; and hope their dear Go-  
" verness will not object to grant

“ this favour, which is warmly soli-  
“ cited by  
THE WHOLE SCHOOL.”

My young readers will be pleased to find that the answer sent them by their Governess was as follows :

“ Your Governess has no ob-  
“ jection to comply with your re-  
“ quest. She remembers her dear  
“ girls have performed the respect-  
“ ive duties of the day well, and is  
“ pleased with this opportunity of  
“ granting them an indulgence. She  
“ intends visiting the play-room in  
“ the course of a few minutes.”

Upon the receipt of this note, away went the gay cushions and needle-cases, the drawing and picture-books, together with the whole train of *et cæteras* which lay upon

the table ; and quickly were the lively group assembled round the fire ; for, busily and happily as these children were engaged at their different amusements, it was a still greater delight to gather in a circle around the blazing fire, and enjoy the company of their Governess in innocent conversation, when she indulged them with an evening visit.

Upon her entering the room, no sullen murmur was heard, no whispered desire that she had not come ; but heartfelt satisfaction was expressed in their countenances ; and “ Here comes our Governess,” resounded from many happy voices.

“ Here is a seat for her,” cried one ; and “ I will fetch a mat for her,” said another.

These matters all being adjusted, they found there was still a little time remaining ere the ringing of the bell should call them to higher and more serious duties ; and, after many a lively remark had been made, their Governess thus addressed them :

“ My dear girls, the long winter-evenings are now arrived. It is my desire to render every part of the day subservient both to your pleasure and your profit ; and I have of late seriously considered the propriety of your employing so much of your time as an evening now occupies, merely in childish amusements ; therefore, it is my intention, provided I meet with attentive auditors, to sit with you ; and, whilst

you employ yourselves in the manufacture of your fancy-articles, your drawing, or other quiet amusements, to endeavour, by conversation or reading, to increase your store of knowledge, by giving you some information upon subjects with which you are, perhaps, unacquainted."

"How very pleasant!" exclaimed the delighted children; "Oh! how happy we shall be!"

"It is my desire you should be so," replied the Governess; "but I must tell you that the privilege will be confined to those who have acted well during the day; and much I hope that no remissness will place me under the unpleasant necessity of removing either of my pupils from the play-room to her chamber."

“Is there time to tell us any thing to night?” asked an interesting little girl who had heard the proposal with great delight.

“No, my love,” replied her preceptress; “but I hope, to-morrow evening, we shall commence our new plan; and I trust it will prove agreeable to all of you.”

“And may we tell all we can, when we write home?” asked a voice from the opposite side of the fire.

“Certainly; you are at liberty to give a relation of what you please to the dear friends from whom you are separated. But, hark!

‘The bell has rung, and we must now retire,

‘Instead of chatting o’er the play-room fire.’”

## FIRST EVENING.

### *The Quicksilver Mines at Idria.*

WITH an unusual degree of alacrity our juvenile party assembled round their work-table on the following evening ; and many an anxious eye had been turned towards the door, before the much-wished-for person made her appearance. At length she entered ; and, upon taking her seat, the younger children, who had been playing in another part of the room, joined their more notable companions at the table. As soon as the clamour of many voices had ceased, their Governess thus began.

## GOVERNESS.

In past days it has been my usual practice to take notes in writing upon what I have read; and they will now be likely to be serviceable to us. In considering of a suitable subject to engage your attention this evening, I remembered these memorandums; and I propose to select from them such as will, I think, be interesting to you. A description of the Quicksilver Mines at Idria is the chosen topick for our first conversation. And now, my dear girls, who can tell me where Idria is?

After some unsuccessful efforts had been made by the children to fix this town in its right situation, an elderly pupil requested to have recourse to an atlas; by which she

found that the district of Idria is in the south of Austria, situated on the west of Carniola, and a little to the north of the Gulf of Triest.

GOVERNESS.

The very youngest of my pupils is, I believe, aware that many valuable metals are found concealed in the bowels of the earth, from whence they are extracted with great labour. The excavations made for that purpose are called Mines; and the persons who work in them, Miners. To obtain some of the metals, it is necessary to dig very deep into the earth. The Quicksilver Mines at Idria are said to be 280 yards in perpendicular depth; but, as the entrance is dug in the side of a mountain, and goes straight in for

some way, the real depth, if measured from the summit of the hill, would be much greater.

“How do people know where to dig for these metals?” asked an attentive pupil; “if they undertake so great a work merely upon chance, they may be disappointed; and if so, the labour and money expended in the attempt are thrown away.”

GOVERNESS.

True, my love, Mining is attended with great labour and expense; no person, I expect, would undertake the sinking of a Mine without being pretty fully persuaded that he should meet with the metal he searched for. The Mines at Idria are said to have been discovered through a curious circumstance,

which I will relate to you. The town is small ; and, before the discovery of its valuable Mines, was but little known. This part of the country abounds with large forests, and was formerly inhabited almost solely by numerous artificers in wood. One evening, a cooper having completed a new tub, put it under a dropping spring, to try if it would hold water. He left it there all night ; and when he came in the morning, he was very much surprised to find it so heavy that he could scarcely move it. From the size of the tub, he knew it could not be the water which occasioned this extraordinary weight ; so he examined his piece of workmanship very carefully, and perceived

something shining at the bottom of it. Of course many of you, my dear children, will be at no loss in guessing that this shining liquid was Quicksilver, which, you know, is a heavy metal. But the poor man, not knowing what to make of all this, conveyed it to the house of a person whom he knew, and who was an Apothecary. This man was so ill-principled as gladly to avail himself of the cooper's ignorance. He paid him a small sum for the metal, and bade him bring some more as soon as he could procure it. After awhile, the affair becoming known, several persons formed themselves into a society, and soon opened a Mine, which is at present said to yield one hundred tons of

Quicksilver annually. In their hands it remained until Charles, Duke of Austria, perceiving the great importance of such a work, gave them a sum of money, as a compensation for the expenses they had incurred in their undertaking, and took it into his own hands.

“To what purpose is Quicksilver applied, dear Governess?”

“And how do people get into the Mine?” said another smiling girl who had been so fully engrossed with the conversation of the evening, that, sitting perfectly absorbed with the subject, her work had lain untouched before her. “If they have a ladder, I suppose it must be a very long one.”

GOVERNESS.

Very proper questions. I am always pleased to satisfy laudable curiosity. Suppose I answer my elder pupil first; and, perhaps, my little Maria will discover, before the evening closes, that sewing and listening to our conversation are not incompatible; as yet, I believe, that pretty needle-case has remained untouched.

Before informing you of the chief uses of Mercury or Quicksilver, I wish you to understand that it is found in two different states: the purer is called Virgin Metal, and is met with in some parts of the Mine in little drops of pure Quicksilver. It is also found in a kind of clay; and sometimes it flows down the

crevices of the Mine in a small continued stream. It is more valuable, and bears a higher price than the common Quicksilver, which is extracted by the force of fire from Cinnabar. This is a red, heavy mineral, a combination of Mercury and Sulphur.

Various preparations of Quicksilver are used as medicine ; but its chief use is in the separation of gold and silver from the numerous ores with which these precious metals are, in their native state, often combined. It is also serviceable in gilding, in fixing tin-foil on glasses for mirrors, and for various other purposes. Of all bodies, it is divisible into the minutest parts ; for, on being exposed to heat it rises in a va-

pour scarcely perceptible to the eye. It becomes solid, if exposed to a very great degree of cold; in the natural temperature of the atmosphere, it is a fluid.

And now it is Maria's turn to have her question answered. Ladders are sometimes used in descending these Mines; but not one only, as my little pupil conjectures; there are many, which are placed in a zig-zag direction from side to side of the shaft of the Mine; and these being wet and narrow, the poor men are exposed to great danger on them; for if any one should fall, he is inevitably dashed to pieces, provided he is not near the bottom when the accident happens. Another method of descending is in a

bucket, which is drawn up and down much in the same manner as in some wells ; but as the entrance is narrow, the bucket is liable to strike against the sides, or to be stopped by something in the way, so that it may be easily upset ; or the rope may break. Thus, you see, they are exposed to dangers on every hand ; and it appears surprising how any one can prefer such a mode of life : but an all-wise Creator wonderfully suits the minds of his creatures to their several allotments.

“ Do they receive high wages, to induce them to run so many hazards ? ” asked an elder pupil. “ Surely nothing but poverty can make them leave the cheerful light of day, and all its comforts, for so dreary an

abode as one situated such a depth under the earth must be."

GOVERNESS.

The common Miners, my love, receive the value of three shillings and sixpence each per week; which, as their wants are few, perhaps, satisfies them. They are not under ground during the whole of the day, but after working a few hours, they ascend to inhale the fresh air, and take refreshment and rest, whilst others supply their places: thus they alternately relieve each other. From the great depth of the Mine, the poor creatures do not enjoy the slightest portion of the light of day. It is illuminated by the gleam of lamps, which, although dull, shed a sufficient radiance to admit of their

finding their way from one part of their dreary mansion to another.

But if you commiserate the situation of those who occasionally ascend, and who are paid for their labour, what will you say when I inform you, that some of the workmen are criminals, condemned by the Austrian government, for different misdemeanours, to perpetual confinement in these Mines. The situation of these convicts is deplorable; they are shut out from all hope of again seeing the cheerful light of day, and are obliged to toil out the remainder of a miserable life under the command of task-masters, who constantly watch over them. But their sufferings are often of short duration; many of them quickly

become afflicted with a paralytic disorder, convulsions, and violent tremblings; they lose their appetites, and in about two years expire, from a total contraction of all the joints of the body. These violent symptoms are not the effects of hard labour, but are principally caused by the very impure air of the Mine, and the insinuating property of the Quicksilver, which affects their bodies so severely that, when they have become very hot, drops of metal have been known to issue through the pores of the skin.

“Poor creatures! how I pity them! Is the Mine so very small as to render the air unwholesome?” asked a voice from the opposite side of the table.

GOVERNESS.

On the contrary, the subterraneous passages are so extensive, that it would occupy several hours to go through them; but in these passages the air is very confined, and the want of a free circulation is one cause of its impurity.

“How cruel the Austrians must be, to send the poor creatures to so dismal a place! I dare say, if the Emperor would forgive them, they would never deserve punishment again,” said a thoughtful-looking girl, who appeared deeply interested in the account.

GOVERNESS.

Very likely not, my dear; but it would not do for those intrusted with the reins of government to rea-

son in that manner. Neither will we charge them with cruelty; but endeavour to believe that, thinking it necessary to suppress crime, as far as possible, they hold out a severe punishment to those who may be tempted to infringe upon their laws.

I may now express the pleasure I have felt this evening in observing the very orderly conduct of my beloved pupils. Those of the younger class merit peculiar approbation, because it is not at all probable they can feel equally interested in the subject with their older school-fellows. And now we must leave our present enjoyments, for the still higher one of reading a portion of the Sacred Volume. Much do I

hope our conversation will not be a means of diverting your thoughts from that which, you well know, ought to be their first object in the morning, and their last at night.

The happy party expressed much pleasure in their evening's entertainment; and, after thanking their preceptress for thus instructing them, cheerfully followed her into the reading-room.

SECOND EVENING.

*Avalanches.*

OUR young friends were early seated at their different employments : their governess soon joined them ; and introduced the subject for their evening's amusement.

GOVERNESS.

Perhaps my pupils will not object to accompany me, this evening, in an ideal visit to that stupendous range of mountains, the Alps. I once read an interesting account of some persons who were buried beneath an immense accumulation of

snow, that fell from a mountain, at the foot of which they resided. But, before I say more of this circumstance, I must request a clear explanation from you, respecting the situation of this range of mountains.

With what consternation did the young beginners in the study of geography now look at each other, knowing if no one could answer, they should not be indulged with the story: fortunately for them, they had companions who could readily reply to their governess's question; and one of these promptly said, "The Alps are the highest mountains of Europe; some of them being more than two miles in perpendicular height: they divide Italy from France, Switzerland, and Germany."

When this answer had been given, the younger children found, in the map, the exact situation of these countries; and, having thus satisfied their laudable curiosity, in anxious expectation awaited the moment when they should hear the anecdote.

GOVERNESS.

On the summits of the Alps, as also on many other mountains, vast quantities of snow collect during the winter, and overhang the precipices. In the spring, when the sun has acquired more power, a sudden thaw occurs, and these masses fall from the heights by their own weight, or are blown off by storms; or, as it is said, the agitation of the air by the least sound, such as the noise of the bells of passing horses, or even the

voices of men, is capable of producing a fall of the snows. Those who are under the necessity of travelling among the Alps in the spring, often contrive to go in company. The travellers then pass on, at convenient distances from each other, that they may be able to hasten to the assistance of those who may be overtaken by an Avalanche, which is the name given to these terrific snow-heaps.

“Does not the poet Montgomery refer to them, when he speaks of the inhabitants of Switzerland being

‘ Struck with horror stiff and pale,

‘ When the chaos breaks on high?’

But I thought he called those masses of snow, Glaciers.”

GOVERNESS.

Yes, my dear, he does ; but, in a note which I am sorry my Anna did not attentively peruse, he acknowledges that the word Avalanches would be more appropriate. Glaciers are more permanent masses of ice, and are formed rather in the valleys than on the summits of the mountains : perhaps I may give you more particulars respecting them another evening. At present we must confine our attention to the Avalanches and our story.

In the year 1755, a family, consisting of a man, named Joseph Rochia, his wife, a sister, two sons and a daughter, resided in a cottage at the foot of the Alps. One morning, in the spring of this year, Joseph,

and his eldest son, who was a youth of fifteen, were on the roof of their house, endeavouring to clear away the snow, which had fallen without any intermission for the three preceding days. Perceiving a mass of snow rolling down towards them from the summit above, they had but just time to retreat from danger, before their house was overwhelmed with an Avalanche twenty yards in height. Believing those who were most dear to them to be buried beneath the ruins, and having no doubt that they were crushed by the enormous weight of the snow, they were so much distressed, that it was five days before they were sufficiently recovered to be able to work. At the expiration of that

time, in company with two of their friends, they endeavoured to find the exact place, under which their house and stable were buried; but, though many openings were made in the snow, they could not find the much-desired spot. However, after a few weeks, the weather being very hot, the unfortunate man was again encouraged to use his best endeavours to recover the effects he had in the house, and to bury the remains of his family. He therefore made new openings in the snow, which was now softened by the heat of the sun. In a few days it was greatly diminished, and he conceived better hopes of finding his house. He broke the ice, which was six feet thick, with iron bars,

and, observing the snow to be softer underneath the ice, he thrust down a long pole, and thought it touched the ground ; but the evening coming on, he desisted from his work. At length they made a sufficient opening to lead them to the house they searched for ; but, discovering no dead bodies in the ruins, they sought for the stable, and having found it, they heard the unexpected cry of “ help, my dear brother ! ” Delighted and encouraged by these words, they laboured with great diligence, until they had made a large opening, through which they immediately went down, and found the wife, sister, and daughter, still alive. The little boy only had ceased to breathe. They were car-

ried to a neighbouring house, put into warm beds, and had suitable nourishment administered. The wife of Joseph Rochia was in a very helpless condition for a considerable time, being quite unable to rise from her bed, or use her feet from the intense cold she had endured, and the uneasiness of the posture she had been in, during their imprisonment in the stable; the sister could walk with some difficulty, and the daughter needed little attention, being soon quite recovered.

“How very surprising that they were not starved,” exclaimed a little girl, who could no longer conceal the astonishment she felt at believing these poor creatures sur-

vived so many weeks without food! “ I am sure, if the dinner-bell does not ring exactly at the right minute, we fancy ourselves very hungry indeed. Do tell me, dear Governess, how they could possibly learn to live without eating ?”

GOVERNESS.

Such a circumstance would be wonderful, indeed. Fortunately for them, they were not necessitated to endure the pangs of hunger.

On the morning of the sad catastrophe, these cottagers went into their stables to see some goats, and to give one of them, which was ill, a little gruel. In a few minutes after their entrance, the building was overwhelmed by the Avalanche; the roof, and part of the ceiling,

yielded to the weight, and immediately fell in, with a loud crash. Very fortunately the manger, into which the poor creatures retreated upon the approach of danger, was under the main prop of the stable, and resisted the weight of snow. As soon as they had a little recovered their terroure, they considered what they had to eat ; the sister had, in her pocket, five chestnuts ; and they remembered there were thirty or forty loaves in a place near the stable : but, after using great exertion, they found themselves unable to get them. Upon this they called loudly for help ; but nobody heard them, and they were soon convinced that they must rely upon their own endeavours to procure food. They

ate their chestnuts, and drank some snow-water. All the goats, excepting five, died; and with the milk of the survivors, they preserved their lives. They then resolved to take all possible care to feed the goats, which they were able to do, as, very fortunately, over the ceiling of the stable, and just above the manger, there was a hay-loft, which was well stored at the time. With this hay they fed these valuable animals, until they could no longer reach it; and then the goats climbed upon their shoulders, and reached it themselves.

On the sixth day of their confinement, the little boy became very unwell, and, shortly after, died.

“Poor fellow!” exclaimed one

of the children. “How long did the survivors remain in their dismal situation?”

GOVERNESS.

About five weeks: and, during all that time, they were obliged to remain in the manger, which was only three feet four inches broad; and this occasioned them more pain and uneasiness than the melted snow which fell upon them.

“But why could they not get out of the manger, and walk about the stable?” asked a little girl, who was of opinion that, to remain quiet so long a time, even if seated on a commodious chair, must be a sad trial. “I am sure I should not like to sit still for a day; much less for five weeks.”

## GOVERNESS.

They were necessitated to do so, my love. Great part of the stable was filled with snow, which entered through the broken ceiling; and it was only by remaining in the manger that they were in any degree of safety.

“Was it quite dark?” asked another of our juvenile friends, who was listening to the narrative with great attention.

## GOVERNESS.

Quite dark, my dear. During the time they were thus buried, they saw not one ray of light; yet, for about twenty days, they had some notion of day and night; for, when the fowls, which were also prisoners with them, crowed, they ima-

gined it was break of day ; but at length these birds died.

“ What a surprising account ! ” exclaimed one of the eldest of the company. “ If I had been in so deplorable a situation, I should never have expected to see daylight again. The prop of the stable must have been very strong indeed, to have sustained so great a weight.”

GOVERNESS.

Such accounts as these, my dear Eliza, should forcibly impress us with the remembrance that a kind Providence every where watches over us, and, under circumstances the most alarming, is able to protect us.

I have now related some of the particulars of this catastrophe, and

will proceed to give you a further description of these formidable Avalanches.

“ But, dear Governess,” remarked one of the happy and deeply-interested group, “ why do people reside in spots, which they must know are in great danger of being overwhelmed, and that too so suddenly, as scarcely to give time for the unhappy creatures to save their lives by flight? A residence at the foot of the Alps is one of the last I should fix on.” “ And I too,” said several of the children together.

GOVERNESS.

It is difficult to account for such a taste ; but I think it probable that many of these people, having been reared amidst such scenes, view

them with greater indifference than those do to whom they are not so familiar. Many of the men are goatherds, who watch their flocks as they feed upon the mountains; others are chamois-hunters, who live by the chase; and some act as guides to the travellers who visit the Alps.

“And what kind of an animal is the chamois?” asked one of the younger children.

GOVERNESS.

Our limited time will not allow us to enter upon any fresh topic this evening, my love; perhaps, in our next conversation, I may give you an account of the chamois, and some other inhabitants of the Alpine regions.

“ Do the Avalanches occur during the whole of the year, or are they dreaded only in the spring ?” asked another of the circle.

GOVERNESS.

They occur in spring, summer, and winter.

“ Then I should like to travel among the Alps in autumn,” said a smiling little girl ; “ but how is it they do not fall then, as well as during the other seasons ?”

GOVERNESS.

I think I can best answer Sophia’s question, by giving my dear pupils a description of the Avalanches, which fall in each of these seasons ; and then, I think, the reason will be obvious.

During the winter months, when

the high mountains are covered with recent snow, the wind or some other cause drives portions of it along the declivities of the rocks, which, accumulating in their progress, ultimately increase to a monstrous size, and thus pursue their formidable course, rolling to the bottoms of the valleys. When men or cattle have the misfortune to be overtaken by this sort of Avalanche, and buried in it, they may be saved by speedily removing the snow. This is often practicable; as these masses are not compact. But when the Avalanche is very large, the unhappy sufferer, unable to extricate himself, perishes with cold.

Those which fall in the spring are much more dangerous; as the snow

is then in a very hardened state. Their descent is so violent that, in falling, they rend the rocks, bury houses and villages, and overthrow whole forests with a resistless impetuosity; and those poor creatures who have the misfortune to be overtaken by one of them, are lost without resource, being stifled or crushed under the enormous weight.

The summer or dust Avalanches are dangerous for neither men nor cattle; because they scarcely ever fall but on the most elevated parts of the mountains, where the snow remains the whole year. They present a very curious and pleasing spectacle, appearing at a distance like streams of silver, surrounded by clouds of extremely fine snow,

precipitating themselves from the rocks. These masses increase as they pass forward, and proceed with a sound resembling that of thunder, which is prolonged by the echoes amid the sublime silence of the Alps.

Of course, by the time autumn is arrived, the snows are too much melted for an Avalanche to be feared.

“ I quite understand that,” said Sophia, “ and if ever I have occasion to travel there, I intend it shall be in the autumn; but at present I have no desire to leave the comforts of our own fireside. Did any person ever reach the summit of the Alps?”

GOVERNESS.

Yes, my love, several travellers

have, within the last few years, reached the summit of Mont Blanc, which you know is one of this mighty range, and is confessedly the highest mountain in Europe. Two peasants, of the names of Balmat and Paccard, were the first who reached the top. They ascended the mountain in the year 1786. The next in height is Mont Rosa.

“Why are the Alps called by such odd names? I do not understand them,” said a little girl, whose eyes bore witness that bedtime was not far off.

GOVERNESS.

Mont Blanc is a French name, my sleepy pupil, and signifies the white mountain; an epithet it has acquired from a great part of it

being always covered with snow. Mont Rosa is supposed to have derived its name from its having a number of peaks, of nearly equal heights, clustered in a circle round a common centre, like the petals of a rose. Who is able to tell me what part of the flower the petal is?

The reply was quickly given by a pupil who was particularly fond of the pleasing study of Botany: "The blossoms, petals, or corolla, is that beautiful, coloured, part of a flower which first draws the attention, and is frequently regarded as the flower itself; but Botanists, more strict in their definitions, appropriate that term to the composition of the whole of the fructification, of which the corolla is only a part."

GOVERNESS.

One question more, I believe, I must put to my young Botanists, and then our conversation must close. Pray what is meant by the term fructification?

“The fructification includes the flower and fruit, and contains the whole process of perfecting the seeds.”

GOVERNESS.

Very well answered. I am pleased to find Catherine so well remembers what she has learned; and that she has not studied “Wakefield’s Botany” in vain.

And now, my dear girls, put away your amusements: it is time to retire; for remember that  
 “Early to bed, and early to rise,  
 Is the way to grow healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

## THIRD EVENING.

---

*A description of some of the Animals that inhabit the Alps.*

THE wholesome evening meal was soon despatched, the hearth was swept, the candles lighted, and the animated group anxiously awaited the arrival of their Governess.

When all were seated, the last evening's conversation was thus resumed by one of the children :

“ Pray do many accidents happen to the cottagers who reside at the foot of the Alps ? ”

## GOVERNESS.

Very many, my love. A modern traveller informs us that, near the skirts of a forest in Switzerland, he saw the ruins of a cottage which was destroyed the preceding spring by an Avalanche, under which a father, mother, and child, perished together. He also relates that he passed a peaceful valley, which was watered by a torrent that descends from an adjacent mountain. How melancholy would have been his feelings, could he have foreseen the catastrophe which occurred there the following spring! An Avalanche fell, and crossing this torrent, obstructed its course. Endeavours were used to let off the water, but in vain; and after the sun had re-

gained its power, and considerably dissolved this vast accumulation of ice and snow, the waters burst with fury down the valleys, sweeping over fine pastures, and carrying away more than forty houses, overthrowing forests, and rolling along the stream large fragments of rock.

The falling of Avalanches is not the only catastrophe the Alpine cottagers have to dread. Enormous masses of rock sometimes roll down from the heights, rushing with the noise of thunder into the valleys below, and burying the inhabitants beneath their ruins.

But I will not throw a gloom over your young minds by relating a succession of afflictive events. I observe deep feeling imprinted on

your countenances. I love to see you interested in the fate of your fellow-creatures : endeavour at the same time, my beloved pupils, to feel truly thankful to a kind Providence who has placed you in a land in which such dangers are unknown.

“ Oh ! how happy we are ! ” whispered one of the children to another ; “ if Papa and Mamma were here, I think I should be quite, quite happy.”

GOVERNESS.

It is perfectly right not to forget Papa and Mamma : I wish you ever to consider your parents as your nearest friends.

A peasant who resided at the foot of the Alps, was singularly saved from sharing the untimely fate which

befel many of his neighbours, who were crushed under the weight of large fragments of rock which suddenly rolled from one of the mountains. An enormous mass was stopped in its descent by a projecting crag, and, covering his dwelling without crushing it, resisted the weight of the stones and earth that followed. The poor man, thus buried alive, sustained himself on cheese, and slaked his thirst from a little rivulet, which this convulsion of nature had conducted to him. He laboured unremittingly to work a passage out; and after three months' toil saw at length, with transport, the light of day. Pale, emaciated, and too feeble to support the brightness of the sun, he

slowly gained the neighbouring village. His appearance excited no small degree of surprise amongst the inhabitants, who had long since numbered him with the silent dead.

“That is a surprising story. And now, dear Governess, do tell us what kind of a creature the chamois is: I fancy every thing terrifick that belongs to the Alps.”

GOVERNESS.

That is quite a mistaken idea, my love: what would our traveller say to such a remark? In speaking of this great and mighty range of mountains, he observes that, “In casting the eye over the extent of the Alps, an inexhaustible treasure of interest is spread before us. So great is the assemblage of the beau-

tiful, the awful, the vast, and the various, comprised within their circuit; stupendous crags, leagues of snow, unmeasured forests; the storm, the torrent, the Avalanche, the smiling valley, the placid lake, the clear fountain, the cascade, the vineyard, the herdman's hut; the village, the town, the republic; character and climate; men and things. Here may be enjoyed alternately the picturesque and the profound; whether looking for the eagle in the cloud, or the chamois on the steep; for the plants of the southern regions, or those of the northern on the heights; still, wherever the traveller turns, a world of wonder and beauty opens to the view." Now, would not my little Sarah's views

be altered if she could see all these beauties?

“I should be afraid,” replied little Ellen, “that an Avalanche would come tumbling down, or that an immense rock would crush me to atoms, or that I should be suddenly washed away by a torrent; and this fear would entirely destroy the pleasure I should otherwise feel in surveying such scenes. But why do they build their towns and villages in the valleys? I should think they would be much safer on the tops of the mountains.”

GOVERNESS.

The constitution of man, my dear, is not suited to inhabit such heights. The summits of the Alps are always covered with snow, and the atmos-

phere is not such as would admit of a continuance on them. A person, named M. de Saussure, who had indulged an ardent desire to reach the top of Mont Blanc, relates that, after some discouragements, he at length succeeded, and remained five hours in his tent on the summit. In this rare atmosphere the whole party experienced entire loss of appetite, and were seized with a burning thirst. The effect of the higher temperature is observed to be invigorating to the body, to a certain elevation ; but, before arriving among perpetual snows, the muscular powers are exhausted with an astonishing rapidity. It is not a mere fatigue with which the traveller is seized, but sometimes a total

exhaustion and inability to advance further, until rest has restored him. Near the top of Mont Blanc, de Saussure could not take more than sixteen paces without stopping; and a fainting sensation from time to time obliged him to sit down. Other symptoms, such as a sudden stupor and nausea, are produced in these high regions.

And now, which of my pupils can describe the situation of Mont Blanc?

The reply was quickly given: "Mont Blanc lies to the south of the lake of Geneva, on the borders of Savoy."

GOVERNESS.

It is highly gratifying to find my pupils are attentive to my instruc-

tions. We will now, if you please, return to our poor chamois, which we have left sadly out of the question. This animal is much valued for its skin, which makes a well-known kind of leather; and its flesh is in great request for food among the inhabitants of Switzerland. It is admired for the beauty of its eyes, and for its small delicate taper horns; the colour of its body is a dusky yellowish brown, and the cheeks, chin, and throat, are of a yellowish white. It is sometimes called the chamois goat; but it has a far more noble appearance than the common goat; and, therefore, should not be confounded with it.

“But I thought I heard yesterday evening,” remarked one of the

younger pupils, "that the Swiss hunt these animals; so I suppose they reside in the valleys, or else to be sure they could seldom get them."

GOVERNESS.

On the contrary, during the summer they chiefly inhabit the highest peaks of the rocks; in winter, however, they prefer the forests and valleys.

"Then I would choose the winter for chamois hunting," said little Susan, whose countenance bore evident marks of deep interest in the conversation.

"I am sure I would not," remarked one of her school-fellows, "I should every moment be afraid of an Avalanche falling on me."

“ Oh ! I forgot that ; let me see ; Avalanches occur in winter, spring, and summer ; well, then, it should be in autumn.”

GOVERNESS.

I believe Susan is not likely to become a chamois hunter just at present ; therefore I will, if she has no objection, continue my account.

A great number of men lose their lives in this chase. The thick fogs of the Alps, which often suddenly cover the country, sometimes lead the hunters astray among the ice, where they perish with cold and hunger ; sometimes sudden storms moisten the rocks, and render them so slippery, that their feet cannot maintain their station ; at other times the heat has so dried the soil,

that the poor hunter, when passing over very dangerous places, has been obliged to moisten the ground with his blood, by making large cuts in the soles of his feet, to prevent his slipping.

“ Oh ! how very shocking ! ” exclaimed one of the children. “ How is it possible there can be people willing to risk their lives, and injure themselves in such a manner, for the sake of a chamois ? Is it very valuable indeed to them ? ”

GOVERNESS.

Twenty or thirty shillings is the usual price of a chamois : of course its condition would be considered in the purchase ; as it would be very materially decreased in value if the skin were torn. These poor people

partly subsist by the chase, and for this employment they often conceive a violent fondness, which, as I have already told you, sometimes produces fatal effects.

I think it unnecessary to give you a long description of the manner of hunting this harmless animal: I have a book in my library, entitled “Evening Entertainments,” which I have no objection to lend to you, provided you are careful of it; and in it you will find a long and interesting account of the whole matter. “Switzerland is celebrated for the poverty of its inhabitants,” remarked an elder pupil; “and truly I think it must be so, since they are willing to run such hazards to procure subsistence.”

## GOVERNESS.

The Swiss, my love, are a poor, brave, hardy, and industrious, people. Their cottages exhibit the liveliest image of cleanliness, ease, and simplicity. They are exceedingly attached to their country, and I expect fully justify the words of our poet Goldsmith, when he remarks, of the Swiss peasant,

*“That every good his native wilds impart  
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;  
And e’en those hills that round his mansion rise  
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.  
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,  
And dear that hill that lifts him to the storms.  
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,  
Clings close and closer to the mother’s breast,  
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind’s roar  
But bind him to his native country more.”*

*“And please what is the mean-*

ing of the word patriot?" asked a little girl.

GOVERNESS.

It signifies *the lover of his country*; and by "the patriot passion" the poet means *the love of his country*.

Perhaps this feeling is, by a kind Providence, particularly instilled into the natives of those countries, in which dangers and privations are the most numerous.

The chamois is not the only animal which frequents the Alps. It is there that the largest eagle is seen to hover, and is very destructive to the flocks of sheep, goats, chamois, and other creatures, that inhabit those regions. In strength and size it far surpasses the royal or golden eagle, a bird which perhaps some

of you have seen. The Swiss call it the Lämmer-geyer, which signifies *Lamb-vulture*. It is a bird of prodigious size; for its wings, when extended, measure fourteen feet from one extremity to the other, which you know is equal to more than four yards and a half; the royal eagle, when its wings are spread, measures about two yards and a half.

A few years ago, a Lämmer-geyer seized a child of three years of age, and would have carried it away, had not the father, armed with a stout stick, fled to the assistance of the terrified little creature; and, after a very obstinate combat, succeeded in conquering his antagonist, which fell dead on the spot.

“What constant fear the Swiss children must be in of being carried away by one of these creatures!”

GOVERNESS.

These birds seek the highest summits for their abode; and but seldom descend to visit the inhabitants of the valleys.

The visitations of bears are much more to be dreaded, as these animals are very numerous in Switzerland. There are two sorts of bears found there; one, large and strong, lives entirely on vegetables, and sleeps during the winter; the other, smaller, but more cruel, is carnivorous; by which epithet you will understand he feeds on flesh.

I remember reading an account of a female peasant of Switzerland,

who was sitting alone in her cottage, rocking her infant and knitting, when a bear made his appearance at the window, with his paw placed against it. With great courage and presence of mind the poor woman strengthened the window by barring it with an iron instrument, and seizing from the hearth a burning brand, rushed out of the door on her enemy, who immediately fled.

“What a courageous woman!” exclaimed several of the children together.

GOVERNESS.

She was indeed; and this anecdote shows how much can be accomplished through presence of mind; had she sat still, or suffered herself to be overpowered with ter-

rour, probably the destruction of herself and infant child might have been the consequence.

But I must not give you an account of so many of the dangers attendant on the inhabitants of Switzerland, without putting it in your power to acquaint yourselves with the varied beauties and enjoyments particularly bestowed on them by nature; for there indeed

“Great, wild, and beautiful, beyond controul,  
She reigns in all the freedom of her soul.”

You shall have the pleasure of perusing a book in my library, which was written a few years since by a person who visited Switzerland, and who gives an animated description of the country, and of

the many enjoyments peculiar to its inhabitants.

Our evening must soon close; but I think I have time to read an account of the hardships which a person underwent in the pursuit of an ibex. This animal very nearly resembles the chamois. The narrative will show you the perilous and precarious nature of such a mode of subsistence; and its great hostility to habits of regular industry, as well as to domestic enjoyments.

*Narrative of the hunter, Alexis de Caillet, related by himself.*

“The 7th of August, 1808, I set out from Salvent; I directed my route by the great St. Bernard, towards the mountains of the Cen-

solles, on the frontiers of Piedmont. I traversed, during a month, the places the ibexes commonly inhabit, without perceiving any traces of them. I passed at length to the Alps, which separate Piedmont from Savoy, where I soon discovered ibex tracks.

Although I was not timed, I could not prevail upon myself to scale alone the very dangerous steeps: I procured therefore three other hunters, and we set out full of hope and courage.

It was on the 28th of September when we arrived across rocks, and along the brinks of the deepest abysses, at the haunts of the ibexes: we perceived at a distance five near each other; but a violent storm

arose, and in less than an hour all was buried a foot deep in snow. It was equally dangerous for us to advance or to recede ; and we remained there a considerable time, not knowing what to resolve on : however, the desire and the hope of soon reaching our prey urged us forward. A ledge of rock, scarcely wide enough for the foot to rest on, and suspended over a terrible abyss, offered the only means of arriving at the spot where we had seen the ibexes. The dangers of this narrow path were increased by the newly-fallen snow, which rendered the surface of these rocks still more slippery. As we advanced on this narrow cornice, we could not plant firmly the left foot without suffering

the right leg and part of the body to hang over the precipice. We had already made some progress in this perilous path, stepping along in silence, when suddenly the foremost of our party lost his balance, and fell to the bottom of the abyss. His last cry reached our ears, and thrilled us with horror; a general tremour seized us and increased our danger. We resolved to retrace our steps; and it was not without indescribable exertions that we succeeded in extricating ourselves from this peril. We returned very sad to our lodging, thinking only of seeking for our unhappy companion; but all our endeavours were without success. The season was however too far advanced for the chase

any longer to be thought of. I resolved not to begin my expedition so late another year.

The following summer I set out on the 26th of July. I again penetrated among the Alps, as far as the borders of Piedmont. After having traversed the wild solitudes unsuccessfully for some days, I thought I perceived, at length, some tracks, at the foot of a chain of mountains almost inaccessible. I made a little stock of provisions, and attempted, with infinite difficulty, to scale the rocks. I began to ascend early in the morning, and it was not till the approach of night that I reached the height where I hoped to surprise the ibexes; for you never succeed when placed lower down than

the animals. It is necessary to wait for them on the heights, because they ascend as they return from grazing. I endeavoured, therefore, to encamp for the night under a rock, where I might be a little sheltered from the wind, which was extremely piercing. A piece of bread and a glass of brandy usually made all my supper. I soon fell asleep; but the cold did not fail quickly to awake me; and I waited impatiently for the dawn. Making a fire to warm myself was out of the question, as I should have scared the ibexes: besides, the nearest fir-trees were three or four leagues below me; and how could I have gone to fetch wood so far, and have carried it among steep rocks and precipices?

No resource remained for warming myself, but motion: I ran to and fro, as far as the space permitted; I carried stones from one place to another; I then leaped over the stones: thus I contrived to avoid perishing with cold.

When day at length arrived, I quitted my exercise, and waited impatiently for the ibexes, whose numerous tracks afforded great hopes; but I could nowhere perceive any. I beat about the neighbourhood all day; everywhere I found traces, but no animal came in sight. I returned to my last night's quarters; the weather was calm, and I slept till daybreak.

I rose, and seized my gun; but my expectations were still deceived

for that day. What was still more mortifying, I perceived that the ibexes had passed close to me, and even fed round me during the night. I consequently resolved not to quit this place until I had obtained my object. Although my provisions were now almost exhausted, I persisted in remaining one day more on this summit, continually occupied in watching for my prey. The sun had already set, when I espied an ibex within gun-shot. I did not hesitate long: I took aim; my shot wounded, but did not kill. The wounded animal took a few leaps, and disappeared from my sight with the swiftness of an arrow. There was no longer daylight enough for me to follow his traces, so that I

found myself obliged to wait till the next morning.

It was scarcely daylight when I hastened to begin my research. I soon discovered traces of the blood, which convinced me that I had not missed my aim; and afforded hopes of soon reaching my prey: but it was not until noon that I discovered the animal lying down at a great distance. He rose, made a few bounds, and lay down again. When I had crept nearer, he appeared to see me; but, as he made a bound, he was reached by another shot which I aimed at him; and I at length found myself in possession of a prey which had been the object of all my efforts during twenty days.

I still had many dangers to en-

counter from the jealousy of the Italian hunters; for I was not on the Swiss territory. In order to avoid this risk, I was obliged carefully to shun the beaten paths and inhabited places, and steal, by night, through the most difficult passes. I was more than once on the point of losing my life. At length, I accomplished my task, and arrived at my house extremely fatigued."

## FOURTH EVENING.

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### *The Peak of Teneriffe.*

“Now, dear Governess,” said one of our juvenile friends, “do entertain us with another story; we have thought a great deal to-day about our last conversation; and we are very impatient to hear something else.”

GOVERNESS.

Well, which way shall we travel? Will you hear any thing relating to your own country, or do you prefer taking a trip across the water?

“ Oh! across the water, across the water,” exclaimed several of the children together.

GOVERNESS.

What! are you so very tired of poor old England, as to wish to leave it in so much haste. It was my intention for us to have remained at home this evening; but, since you are so unanimous in your desire to go abroad, in what direction shall we steer our course?

“ Anywhere,” said one of the lively group, “ so that we do but meet with interesting adventures; for they are some of the most delightful of all things. I love to hear of the exploits of travellers in different parts of the world, of the dangers and escapes they have met

with, and the manners of the different people they have visited : but it is a very shocking thing to hear of such disasters as the poor chamois-hunter met with, who fell down the precipice, and was dashed to pieces !”

## GOVERNESS.

I find it a little difficult, my dear girls, immediately to fix upon a story which blends instruction with amusement ; and the one, without the accompaniment of the other, I do not desire for you. However, I will do my best to gratify you. Suppose we pay a visit to the Canary Islands, and see how far we can amuse ourselves with an imaginary ascension of the Peak of Teneriffe.

“ Did my pretty bird come from

those islands ?” asked an interesting little girl; “because, it is called a canary-bird.”

GOVERNESS.

Canary-birds were originally brought from thence; and from these islands they derive their name. Louisa’s bird is, I suppose, a little European; for I do not imagine it ever existed in the Canaries, as numbers of them are now bred in this country.

“It was given to me when it was very young,” answered Lucy. “Once I thought of letting it hop about upon the lawn; and I expected *that* would make it very happy; but Papa said he thought it would fly away, so I let it stay where it was.”

## GOVERNESS.

A bird that has been always used to confinement would feel very helpless if turned out upon the wide world, and would probably meet some untimely end. I have heard of canaries that have appeared glad to find their cage again; when, from the door having been carelessly left open, they had made their escape. Their habits appear to be, in England, so completely artificial, that even their natural notes are scarce known. Perhaps this may be partly attributed to the frequent circumstance of their being confined with other little warblers, whose song they imitate.

Canary-birds are by no means devoid of sagacity. One was ex-

hibited in London, some years ago, that had been taught to pick up the letters of the alphabet at command, so as to spell the name of any person in the room; and this was so conducted, by motions from its master, that the mode was totally imperceptible to the company. But I confess myself not partial to such unnatural exhibitions.

Suppose we now follow our companions to the islands.

You will, my dear pupils, perhaps, remember that the Canaries are situated in the Atlantic Ocean, near the coast of Africa. They are in about 28 degrees of North latitude, and 15° West longitude. There are seven of them: Canaria, Palma, Ferro, Gomera, Teneriffe, Fuertaven-

tura, and Lancerota. This cluster was formerly called the Fortunate Islands, on account of their temperate and healthy air, and the excellent fruits which they abundantly produce.

In the centre of the island of Teneriffe is the celebrated mountain, which is known by the name of the Peak. It is to this spot I wish to direct your attention this evening. I have lately read an interesting account of some travellers who ascended the Peak; and, I expect, you will be pleased to hear their adventures.

In the beginning of the month of September, 1761, a gentleman of the name of Glas, in company with the master of a vessel, set out to

visit the Peak. They took with them a servant, a muleteer, and a guide. Perhaps you know that mules are always used in ascending mountains, as they are remarkably sure-footed, and peculiarly well adapted to travel safely over the rugged and dangerous steeps.

“Oh! yes,” said one of the children, “we remember hearing about the poor mules in “Winter Evenings.” What careful creatures they must be! I long to hear how our travellers succeeded.”

GOVERNESS.

They commenced their journey about four o'clock in the afternoon. They chose this time for setting out, that they might gain the top of the Peak early the next morning, to

prevent their being oppressed with the heat of the sun, which, in those warm latitudes, would, in the middle of the day, be excessive.

After ascending about six miles, they arrived, a little before sunset, at a resting-place, where they halted. Here the servants watered the cattle, and filled some barrels, to serve them in their expedition.

“By their making such preparations, it seems as though they were going on a very formidable journey,” remarked one of the company. “Is the Peak of Teneriffe a very high mountain?”

GOVERNESS.

Yes, my love; it is one of the highest mountains in the world; but not so difficult in its ascent as

many others. Its height is differently stated by different writers. The chevalier de Bonda, who measured its height in 1776, calculates it to be 12,340 English feet above the level of the sea. But Dr. Heberden, who was provided with proper instruments to ascertain its height, and who made the nicest observations at three different times, found its elevation to be 15,396 English feet, which is nearly equal to three miles. If this latter measurement is correct, the height of the Peak of Teneriffe is, perhaps, exceeded only by Mont Blanc, by some of the loftiest of the Andes, and the still more lofty Himalayan range in Thibet. It is said that, in a clear day, the Peak may be

seen at the distance of 120 miles.

Our travellers, mounting again, pursued their way for some time up a steep road, and reached a part of the mountain which is covered with woods, and entered the clouds just as it grew dark.

“Oh! how dismal!” exclaimed a little girl, “I should have been afraid of losing myself in the woods; and I would much rather be comfortably seated where I am.”

GOVERNESS.

They could not easily miss their way, as the road was bounded on both sides with trees or bushes. Having travelled about a mile, they came to the upper edge of the wood, above the clouds, where, alighting, they made a fire and supped; and

then lay down to sleep under the bushes.

About half-past ten, when the moon shone brightly, they mounted again, and pursued their way slowly, for two hours, through an exceedingly rugged road. After they had left this track, they came to a part which was covered with small light pumice stones, upon which they rode pretty briskly for nearly an hour. They now felt the air to be very cold and piercing. Having arrived at a convenient spot, their guide desired them to alight and rest until four or five in the morning. To this they agreed, and entered a cave, before the mouth of which a wall had been built up high to exclude the cold. Here

they found some dry withered shrubs, with which they made a great fire, and then fell asleep ; but, alas ! our poor travellers did not rest long, being quickly awakened by the cold, thin air, and the other inconveniences of their situation. Notwithstanding the shelter of the wall, and although they lay so near the fire that one side was almost scorched, yet the other was benumbed with cold. At five in the morning, they pursued their way, and travelled slowly about a mile ; for the road was rather too steep to proceed quickly, and their mules were become fatigued. At length they came among some rocks, where was a kind of cottage built of loose stones, called the “ Resting-place of

the English," probably from some of our countrymen having rested there, on their way to visit the Peak. Here they again alighted, and the guide having informed them that the way was become too steep for riding, they proceeded on their journey on foot. They soon came to a cave, called Teyde, which is surrounded, or rather buried, on all sides, by volcanic rocks. From this cave the islanders supply themselves with snow, when their common reservoirs fail them. They use the snow in cooling their wines and other liquors. Our travellers entered, and found the water in it so excessively cold that it could not be drunk. Again they set forward on their expedition; and, after travelling

about a quarter or half a mile upon large stones, they reached the bottom of the real Peak, or Sugar-loaf, which is exceedingly steep. The difficulty of ascending it is greatly increased by the composition of the surface; it being a very loose, soft earth, which gives way under foot. Although this eminence is not above half a mile in height, they were obliged to stop, to recover their breath, nearly thirty times; and when, at length, they reached the summit, they were necessitated to lie down and rest upon the bare ground, their strength being entirely exhausted. Probably, these feelings were as much owing to the thinness of the air, which causes a difficulty of respiration, as to the

uncommon fatigue they felt in climbing the hill. Their guide, who was a thin, active old man, was far from being affected in the same manner, but climbed up with ease; for he was one of the poor men who earn their living by gathering brimstone, of which there is a good deal lying about the soil; and, therefore, he was well accustomed to the ascent.

“Brimstone and pumice stones too!” remarked one of our young friends; “why, indeed, that sounds a little as if a volcano was not far distant.”

GOVERNESS.

There are several volcanoes, my love, belonging to this group of islands; but I believe that no erup-

tions have taken place for many years. The Peak itself is, in fact, no other than a volcano : it is hollow, and shaped like a bell with the mouth upward. The ground on the summit is very hot, and a smoke, or vapour, of a strong sulphureous smell, arises in different places. On observing some spots of soft clay, our company tried the heat with their fingers ; but could not thrust them in farther than half an inch, as they found that, the deeper they penetrated, the hotter it became. They then took their guide's staff, and thrust it about three inches deep into the earth, where the smoke appeared thickest ; and, having held it there a minute, they found it burned to a cinder.

The Sugar-loaf is entirely composed of earth mixed with ashes and calcined stones, thrown out of the volcano during its eruptions.

“What is the meaning of the word *calcined*, dear Governess?”

GOVERNESS.

The word *calcined* signifies *burned to a cinder*. It is a proper question for a little girl to ask, and I answer it with pleasure. It gratifies me to observe my pupils desirous of improvement.

“How can we be otherwise,” exclaimed an elder pupil, “when our Governess takes so much pains to instruct us!”

GOVERNESS.

From the summit of the Peak, the clouds, which were at a great

distance beneath them, looked like the ocean, excepting that the surface was not quite so blue and smooth, but had the resemblance of white wool; and where this cloudy ocean, as it may be called, touched the mountain, it seemed to foam like billows breaking on the shore.

After they had surveyed every thing worthy of notice, our travellers descended to the place from whence they had set out on foot: this took up only half an hour, although they were about two hours and a half in ascending. It was then about ten o'clock in the morning, and the sun shone so exceedingly hot, that they were obliged to take shelter in the cottage where they laid down to rest. About noon

they pursued their way; and, in the evening, arrived at Orotava. This is a large, populous, clean town, delightfully situated on the side of the mountain, and surrounded with vineyards in high cultivation.

Dr. Herberden remarks that, when the body of this mountain is covered with clouds, the Peak often appears above them quite clear; and sometimes the contrary happens, and only the summit of the Peak is covered with a thick white cloud. This is often observed in the finest weather; and the inhabitants of the island say, on these occasions, that “the Peak has put his little hat on:” this they consider a certain indication of rain. Heberden further remarks, that, during

the several years of his residence at Orotava, where he had a continual sight of the Peak, he never remembers one instance in which the prediction failed.

I suppose many of you have read of the celebrated navigator, Captain Cook. In the account of his first voyage round the world, he describes the appearance of this mountain when viewed from the sea, at sunset. He observes that, after the sun is below the horizon, and the rest of the island appears of a deep black, the mountain still reflects his rays, and glows with a warmth of colouring which no painter can portray.

“ Really, dear Governess,” exclaimed one of the scholars, “ tra-

vellers must see a great many beautiful sights! How much Captain Cook must have seen, when he sailed all round the world! I long for the time to come for me to write home, and tell Papa what happy evenings we spend."

"Yes, and days too," said another.

GOVERNESS.

Your good behaviour, my beloved pupils, makes you happy: great pleasure does it afford me, from day to day, to observe your orderly conduct; and much do I desire its continuance. And whilst you are busily endeavouring to store your minds with useful knowledge, do not forget that to which all else should be subservient,—that which,

in the hour of prosperity, will prove your stay ; and, in adversity, your support : a study of best things alone will procure for you true happiness. And, now, upon retiring to your chambers, endeavour to dismiss from your minds our recent topick of conversation, and seriously examine in what manner you have spent the past day ; and, if any of you find you have been guilty of a fault, endeavour to feel real sorrow for it, and resolve to be more cautious for the future. Thus you will ensure to yourselves true peace ; and, in your own experience, verify the observation that “ To be good is to be happy.”

## FIFTH EVENING.

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### *Diamond Mines.*

“MY dear girls,” said this fond Governess, upon taking her seat at the table, “as we have for some evenings ascended to the *heights*, I am disposed that we shall now descend into the *depths*.”

“Probably you know that a *Diamond* is a very precious gem; but, perhaps, few of you are acquainted with the manner in which it is procured, or even know from what countries it is brought. I think our evening may be pleasantly and, I

hope, not altogether unprofitably spent, if I endeavour to give you some information on this subject."

"So far from knowing from whence they come," remarked one of our young friends, "for my part, I really do not know what a Diamond is: I believe it is a very precious gem, and a very sparkling one; and that is the extent of my knowledge on the subject: so, if my schoolfellows are no wiser than myself, it will indeed be kind to instruct us."

GOVERNESS.

I apprehend that a little information about these precious stones will do no harm; therefore, hoping to make myself clearly understood, I will begin with telling you what a Diamond is.

This highly-prized production is the hardest substance in nature; and is not, as was formerly supposed, earthy or stony, but consists of pure carbon; that is, it is a substance which, when exposed to a current of air, and heated to a sufficient temperature, is completely combustible without smoke or flame.

Diamonds are either colourless, or of a yellow, blue, yellowish green, clove brown, black brown, prussian blue, or rose red, colour.

To bring them to that degree of perfection, in which their beauty consists, the Diamond-cutters begin by rubbing two rough ones against each other; by this means they take off the dull outer crust with which they are covered: this

reduces them to a regular form, and the powder rubbed off serves afterwards to polish the stones. This process is effected by means of a mill, which turns a wheel of cast iron, smeared with a mixture of Diamond-dust and oil of olives.

“ But,” said a lively little lass, “ if the Diamonds are found in so dull a state, I wonder the workmen do not pass them over without seeing them : I suppose they look like dirty pebbles.”

GOVERNESS.

The Mines are generally adjacent to rocky hills and mountains ; and sometimes the Diamonds are found scattered in the earth, near the surface ; in other places the Miners are obliged to dig through rocks, to

the depth of 40 or 50 fathoms, till they come to a sort of mineral earth, in which these precious stones are enclosed. This earth is of a yellowish, and sometimes of a reddish, colour; and it frequently adheres to the Diamond with so strong a crust, that it is difficult to get it off. In order to find the Diamonds, the workmen form a cistern of clay, with a small hole on one side, a little above the bottom. Into this hole they put a plug, and throwing into the cistern all the earth they have dug, they pour in water to dissolve it. They then break the clods, and stir the wet earth in the cistern; the lighter part of which is carried off in mud, when the vent-hole is opened to let out the water. Thus

they continue washing, till what is in the cistern is pretty clean; and then, in the middle of the day, when the sun shines bright, they carefully look over the sand; at which they are so expert, that the smallest stone cannot escape them. The brightness of the sun being reflected by the Diamonds, assists them in the search; but, if a cloud was to intervene, they would not be so easily discovered. This is the method pursued in Golconda.

The Mines in which these gems are found extend through a long tract of country, from Bengal to Cape Comorin; but the chief of them are now between Golconda and Masulipatam. Diamonds are also found in the island of Borneo,

and in Brazil. These places, I trust, some of you know; are situated in the East-Indies, with the exception of Brazil, which is a large and productive country of South America.

“ But are not Diamonds found in England?” queried one of the group; “ for I have heard of Cornish Diamonds.”

GOVERNESS.

This is the name given by the Miners to the crystals that are found, in digging in the tin-mines, in that county; but these are, in fact, no more Diamonds than any other pieces of crystal.

The largest Diamond ever known in the world, is one belonging to the king of Portugal, which was found

in Brazil. It was originally of a still larger size than it now is; but a piece was broken off by the ignorant countrymen who found this gem, and who tried its hardness by the stroke of a large hammer, upon the anvil. This prodigious Diamond weighs 1680 carats; (the carat being equal to four grains;) and it is said to be valued at 224 millions sterling.

The famous Diamond, in the possession of the Emperor of Russia, weighs 779 carats, and is valued at nearly five millions of pounds sterling. This Diamond was one of the eyes of an idol, worshipped by the Hindoos, who inhabit the coast of Malabar: a French grenadier, who had deserted from military ser-

vice, contrived to become one of the priests of the idol; and, after being put into this office, acted so basely as to steal the Diamond. After it had passed through several hands, Prince Orloff purchased it at Amsterdam, in the year 1776, for his sovereign, the Empress of Russia.

The Diamond which belonged to the late unfortunate king of France, Louis XVI, called the Pitt, or Regent, was the most costly jewel belonging to that crown. It was purchased by Louis XIV, for one hundred and thirty thousand pounds; though its value has been calculated at nearly double that sum.

“But, dear Governess, to what uses are Diamonds principally ap-

plied? Are they merely considered as ornaments?"

GOVERNESS.

The *principal* use made of the Diamond is in ornamental jewellery; but it is also employed by glaziers to cut glass, and by lapidaries to engrave the harder gems.

"Are criminals employed in the Diamond Mines?" said a little girl: "if they are, I would rather never wear a Diamond as long as I live: I have not forgotten the poor creatures in the Idrian Mines."

GOVERNESS.

I am pleased to observe that my younger pupils are attentive to the conversation; for I entertained a fear that our present subject might not prove as amusing to them as

some others. It is my sincere desire to gratify all; and, I hope, from the happy countenances around me, I have succeeded.

I believe, none of the workmen employed in the Diamond Mines are criminals: those who work in the Brazilian Mines are negroes; but, in the East-Indies, free labourers are employed; for there are no negroes there.

In Mawe's "Travels into the interior of Brazil," there is much curious, and some entertaining, information respecting these Mines. He informs us that, when a negro is so fortunate as to find a Diamond of the weight of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  carats, much ceremony takes place. He is crowned with a wreath of flowers, and car-

ried in procession to the administrator or governour, who gives him his freedom. He also receives a present of new clothes, and is permitted to work on his own account.

Mawe witnessed a very interesting circumstance of this kind. A stone of  $16\frac{1}{2}$  carats was found; and, he says, "it was pleasing to see the anxious desire manifested by the overseers that it might prove sufficiently heavy to entitle the poor negro to his freedom; and, when it proved to be only a carat short of the requisite weight, all seemed to sympathize in his disappointment."

"Oh! poor fellow!" exclaimed a little feeling voice, "how sorry he must have been! and how sorry I am for him! And so, I suppose, he

had to go on working, just as if he had found nothing at all."

GOVERNESS.

Not so, my love; they receive presents according to the worth of the stones which they find: for one of eight or ten carats, the negro receives two new shirts, a complete new suit of clothes, with a hat, and a handsome knife; and for stones of a smaller value, they receive proportionably.

Whilst talking of the labours of the negroes, I wish you to bear in mind that these poor creatures, like their brethren in the West-Indies, and some other parts of America, are kept at work by one overseer or more, who holds in his hand a long whip, which he fails not to

make use of, when any one of them is observed to be dilatory or unruly. How revolting to every feeling mind! and what indignation against this cruelty must the reflection excite, that these poor injured brethren of ours have as much right to the enjoyment of liberty as their tyrannical taskmasters!

“But, are not the overseers afraid of the negroes secreting the Diamonds?” asked one of the children.

GOVERNESS.

Many precautions are taken to prevent such a circumstance. On a heap of earth, at equal distances, three high chairs are placed for the overseers, from whence they diligently watch the proceedings around them.

When a negro finds a Diamond, he immediately stands upright and clasps his hands; then he extends them, holding the gem between his fore-finger and thumb. An overseer receives it from him, and deposits it in a bowl, which is half filled with water. In this vessel, all the Diamonds, which are found in the course of the day, are placed; and, at the close of work, they are delivered to the principal officer, who, after weighing them, registers the particulars in a book, kept for that purpose.

The negroes work in a bent position, and cannot see the overseer who is watching them; and, lest they should conceal any Diamonds, they are frequently changed, at the

word of command. They are also obliged to go almost naked ; but all these precautions are not sufficient, as the negroes have been known to swallow them.

“And do many negroes obtain their freedom by being so fortunate as to find a large Diamond?”

GOVERNESS.

The number is, I believe, very small. Diamonds are not so plentifully scattered in the Mines as to procure very frequent presents for the poor negroes. When Mawe visited the Brazilian Mines, he was informed, by the officers, that, on an average, there are seldom more than two or three of the requisite weight found in the course of a year at the works, which he particularly

describes; and not once in two years do they find a diamond weighing as much as 30 carats.

But, in speaking of the different weights of these precious stones, a narrative occurs to my remembrance which will, perhaps, amuse you. During Mawe's stay at Rio Janeiro, he was consulted by the Prime Minister upon the following affair. A free negro, who resided about nine hundred miles distant, wrote a letter to the Prince Regent, announcing that he possessed an amazingly large Diamond, which he had received from a deceased friend, some years before, and which he begged he might be permitted to present to his Royal Highness in person. At that time the Royal family of Portugal,

who had emigrated to Brazil in 1808, were settled at Rio Janeiro.

The Prince immediately despatched an order that the negro should forthwith proceed to the capital. He was accommodated with a conveyance, and escorted by two soldiers; and, as he passed along, he received numerous congratulations on his supposed good fortune. At length, after a journey which occupied nearly twenty days, he arrived at Rio Janeiro, and was forthwith conducted to the palace. He imagined his happiness was now about to be consummated; that, in a few moments, the hopes which he had for many years indulged would be realized; and that he should be exalted, from a low and obscure con-

dition, to a state of affluence and distinction. When admitted, he threw himself at the Prince's feet, and delivered his wonderful gem. A round Diamond, of nearly a pound in weight, filled all present with wonder: some reckoned the millions it was worth; others found it difficult to numerate the sum at which it would be valued. But some there were who expressed a doubt that it might not prove a real Diamond. However, it was sent to the treasury, under a guard, and deposited in the jewel-room.

The next day our traveller was sent for, and received orders to examine this gem, and to give his opinion respecting its value. Upon his reaching the treasury, an officer

led him through several apartments to the grand chamber, where he met the treasurer and his secretaries. In an inner room, to which they were conducted, there were several strong chests; having each three locks; the keys of which were kept by three different officers, who were all required to be present at the opening. One of these chests being unlocked, an elegant little cabinet was taken out, from which the treasurer took the supposed gem, and presented it, for examination, with great form.

Our connoisseur immediately perceived it was nothing more than a round piece of crystal. To convince the treasurer of the truth of

his supposition, he took up a Diamond of five or six carats, and with it cut a very deep nick in the stone; which, you know, could not have been done, had it been a Diamond. This was proof positive, and a certificate was accordingly made out, stating that it was an inferiour substance, of little or no value. Our poornegro was, therefore, compelled to return home, much disappointed in his great expectations.

“Oh! poor man!” exclaimed one of the children; “then, of course, his expectations of becoming rich and great, by the sale of his Diamond, were groundless; and he had nothing left to do, but to endeavour to be satisfied with his obscure station.”

## GOVERNESS.

And that, I hope, proved no difficult task ; but, when once the mind becomes elated with the desire of wealth and greatness, it often proves the cause of much unhappiness. Many there are, doubtless, who, toiling in the pursuit of worldly gain, might envy such a state as that of our poet Cowper's cottager,

“ Who weaves at her own door,  
Pillow and bobbins all her little store :  
Content, though mean, and cheerful, if not gay,  
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day :  
*She* earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;  
And in *her* Bible reads, with sparkling eyes,  
Her title to a treasure in the skies.”

## SIXTH EVENING.

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*Columbus.*

“WELL, dear Governess, and what is to be our subject to night?” asked one of the children, upon their assembling to their different employments.

GOVERNESS.

Indeed, my love, I have not quite decided; but, I rather thought of one which, perhaps, will interest you: of course, some of you know who was the discoverer of America?

“Oh, yes, Christopher Columbus,” said several of the children, in one voice.

GOVERNESS.

I think of entertaining you, this evening, with an account of this great man; and of the astonishing perseverance he displayed in the accomplishment of this discovery.

“Oh! delightful!” exclaimed one of the group: “I dare say it will be very interesting; and it will be something quite new; for we have had no account of a voyage yet.”

GOVERNESS.

Christopher Colon, or Columbus, was descended of an honourable family, but one that had been reduced, by various misfortunes, to a state of indigence. He was a subject of the republick of Genoa; but, neither the time nor the place of his birth can be ascertained, with

any degree of certainty. From his early youth, he discovered a strong predilection for a sea-faring life, which his parents appear to have encouraged, by the education they gave him.

In the year 1461, at the early age of fourteen, he commenced his career on the watery element, by taking voyages to some ports in the Mediterranean, which the Genoese much frequented. But, this sphere of action proving too narrow for his active mind, he made an excursion to the Northern Seas, in the year 1467, and visited the coasts of Iceland, whither the English and other nations had begun to resort, on account of its fisheries. Returning from this voyage, which, perhaps,

had tended more to enlarge his knowledge of naval affairs than to improve his fortune, he entered into the service of a celebrated captain, of his own name and family. With him, our young adventurer continued for several years, and became no less distinguished for his courage than for his experience as a sailor. As a proof of his courage and presence of mind, I will relate a circumstance which occurred about this time. In an obstinate naval engagement, off the coast of Portugal, the vessel, on board of which Columbus was, took fire. In this dreadful extremity, his intrepidity and presence of mind did not forsake him: he threw himself into the sea, laid hold of a floating

oar, and, by the support of it, and his dexterity in swimming, reached the shore, although it was more than two leagues distant.

“Then, that must be more than six miles,” exclaimed a little listener. “Oh! what a courageous man! Do go on, dear Governess; for I long to hear how he came to find out that there was such a country as America.”

GOVERNESS.

About this time the Portuguese, encouraged by their virtuous prince Henry, were making many discoveries on the coast of Africa. This patriotick prince carried on his schemes of discovery, without a motive of ambition, or the desire of wealth; and was justly entitled to

assume the motto, which described the talent by which he wished to be distinguished, *the talent of doing good*. In his death, the Portuguese suffered an almost irreparable loss: they were, however, after some time, again inspirited by their king, John II; and, with his encouragements were, at the time of the discovery of America, endeavouring to effect a passage to the East-Indies, by sailing round the extremity of Africa. The fame of the discoveries they made spread over Europe, and, probably, first induced Columbus to reflect upon the subject; and this reflection led him to conclude that, as the earth is round, he should, by sailing directly to the westward, arrive by an

easier and shorter route to the East.

By the experience he had acquired during a variety of voyages to almost every part of the globe, with which, at that time, any intercourse was carried on by sea, he had become one of the most skilful navigators in Europe. But, the empty praise this skill acquired for him could not satisfy such a mind as his: naturally inquisitive, and capable of deep reflection, his thoughts were often employed in revolving the principles upon which the Portuguese had founded their schemes of discovery, and he gradually formed the resolution of endeavouring to improve upon their plan, and to accomplish discoveries, which they had, hitherto, attempted in vain.

After long and seriously revolving every circumstance, suggested by his superiour knowledge in the practice of navigation, as well as from attentively comparing the observations of modern sailors with the hints and conjectures of ancient authors, he at length concluded that, by sailing directly towards the west, across the Atlantic Ocean, he must arrive at the east, and infallibly discover new countries in his route. He conceived it suitable to our ideas of the wisdom and beneficence of the Great Author of all, to believe that the vast space still unexplored was not entirely covered by a waste unprofitable ocean; but, that it was occupied by countries suited to the habitation of man. He was still fur-

ther confirmed in this opinion by some circumstances which had recently occurred. A Portuguese pilot, having stretched further to the westward than was usual at that time, found, upon the wide waste of waters, a piece of timber, artificially carved; and, as it was driven towards him by a westerly wind, he concluded that it came from some unknown land, which was situated in that direction. Another navigator had found, to the west of the Madeira Isles, a piece of timber, carved in the same manner, and brought by the same wind; he had likewise seen canes, of a very large size, floating upon the waves. After a westerly wind, trees, torn up by the roots, were often driven upon

the coast of the Azores ; and once, the dead bodies of two unfortunate men were found there, who had singular features, differing from those of the inhabitants of any part of the world, then discovered.

The force of this united evidence was so convincing to Columbus, that he was impatient to bring it to the test of experiment, and to set out upon a voyage of discovery. With this view, he laid his scheme before the ruling powers of Genoa ; and offered to sail under the banners of that republick. But, our adventurer had been absent so many years from his native country, that the Genoese were unacquainted with his abilities and character ; and, although they were a maritime

people, they immediately rejected his proposal.

Undaunted by this refusal, he paid a visit to the court of Portugal, and tendered his services to King John the Second, who was a monarch of an enterprising spirit, and was considered no incompetent judge in naval affairs. But, here he met with a mortification still greater than the first. King John referred the consideration of the plan to some persons who had been the chief conductors of the Portuguese navigation ; and who, basely mean, conspired to rob Columbus of the honour and advantages which he expected from the success of his scheme. To effect this unworthy purpose, they advised the king to

dispatch a vessel, secretly, in order to attempt the proposed discovery, by steering the course which had been pointed out to them by Columbus, in their frequent interviews with him. The monarch forgetting, on this occasion, sentiments becoming his high station, meanly adopted this perfidious counsel. But, the pilot chosen to execute the plan, had neither the genius, nor the fortitude, sufficient for such an undertaking. Contrary winds arose, no sight of approaching land appeared, his courage failed, and, returning to Lisbon, he boldly pronounced the project to be extravagant and dangerous.

“That is right; that is right;” exclaimed several animated voices.

## GOVERNESS.

A plan, undertaken with motives so base, was likely to be productive of nothing but shame and regret: the glory of the discovery was still reserved for Columbus alone.

“But, did he know of their treacherous conduct?” asked a much interested pupil. “I wonder he was not too much discouraged to persevere in his attempt.”

## GOVERNESS.

In the character of Columbus, we have a remarkable instance of steady perseverance under deep discouragements. Upon discovering this dishonourable transaction, he felt all the indignation natural to an ingenuous mind; and, instantly quitting the kingdom, resolved to

break off all intercourse with persons capable of such conduct.

As he was at liberty to court the protection of any patron he pleased, he resolved to propose his plan, in person, to Ferdinand and Isabella, then king and queen of Spain. After numerous conferences, and having spent five years in fruitless solicitations, the project was laid aside by these monarchs.

“Well,” exclaimed a lively little lass, “if I had been Columbus, I would have rested in peace, and left America to take care of itself.”

GOVERNESS.

Happily for mankind, that superiority of genius and ardent enthusiasm, for which our hero is so justly celebrated, was not yet extin-

guished. Deeply as he felt the blow thus given to his hopes, he would not relinquish his design ; his confidence in the justness of his own system did not diminish ; and his impatience to make an actual experiment became greater than ever.

In the midst of the painful sensations occasioned by such a succession of disappointment, he sustained the additional distress of receiving no intelligence of his brother Bartholomew, whom he had sent, some years before, to solicit the protection of the court of England. This brother had, in his voyage, been so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of pirates, who robbed him of all he possessed, and

detained him a prisoner several years. At length, he made his escape, and arrived in London, but in a state of so much poverty, that he was obliged to employ himself in drawing and selling maps, to raise money to purchase a decent dress, in which he might appear at court. Whilst you are studying your maps, perhaps it will be interesting to you to remember that these indispensable assistants in the study of geography, which Bartholomew Columbus then sold, were the first that were introduced into England.

King Henry the Seventh received his proposals with more approbation than any monarch to whom they had been presented.

“ Ah! old England is the best place, after all. But, dear Governess, why did he apply to any court? Could he not have sailed where he pleased?”

GOVERNESS.

The expense of fitting out a few ships, for so long a voyage, would be greater than most private individuals could undertake; and many other causes rendered it desirable that he should obtain the patronage of some powerful sovereign. He did, however, apply to two or three opulent persons in Spain, after his proposals had been rejected by Ferdinand; but they, either not choosing to risk so great an expense, or fearing that they should excite the jealousy of their sove-

reign, by adopting any scheme which he had rejected, could not be induced to forward the views of Columbus.

“And what is meant by the word *pirate*?” asked a little girl: “I think, if *pirates* are men, they must be very naughty.”

GOVERNESS.

Pirate signifies a person who robs on the sea: in their predatory excursions, pirates were, formerly, very troublesome to the trading vessels, in most parts of the world; but they are now not so numerous.

And, now, we will return to Columbus, of whom, I dare say, you are impatient to hear more. Being unacquainted with his brother's fate, he resolved to visit England in per-

son, and had already made preparations for his departure, when he was recalled to the court of Spain. Juan Perez, a Spaniard, for whom queen Isabella maintained a great regard, ventured to write to his sovereigns, entreating them to consider Columbus's proposal afresh, and to give it the attention which it merited. Others, also, ventured to address Isabella, expressing some surprise that she, who had always been the patroness of generous undertakings, should hesitate to countenance the most splendid scheme that had ever been proposed to any monarch; that Columbus was already on his way to foreign countries, where some prince, more fortunate and adventurous, would close with his

proposals ; and that Spain would ever bewail that fatal timidity which had excluded her from the glory and advantages that she once had it in her power to possess. These arguments dispelled all Isabella's objections. Columbus was instantly recalled. And, as the state of the royal finances were low, the queen even offered to pledge her own jewels, in order to raise the money necessary for the voyage. A treaty was signed ; and Isabella, by her attention and activity in forwarding the preparations, endeavoured to make some reparation to Columbus for the time he had lost in fruitless solicitation.

“ Well,” said one of our company, “ that was acting like a good queen ;

and, I think, Columbus was very generous to forgive, so easily, her former conduct."

GOVERNESS.

The art of ship-building, in that age, was extremely rude ; and it is a proof of the courage, as well as enterprising genius, of Columbus, that he ventured with a fleet, consisting of only three ships, upon a voyage to explore unknown seas, where he had no knowledge of the tides and currents, and no experience of the dangers to which he might be exposed.

At length, on the 3rd day of August, in the year 1492, our adventurer set sail, before sunrise, in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators, who expressed their de-

sires for a prosperous voyage, which they *wished*, rather than *expected*.

He arrived at the Canary Islands on the 13th. And here the voyage of discovery may properly be said to have begun ; for, he now left the usual track of navigation, and boldly ventured into unknown seas.

Now, my dear girls, you had better fetch your maps, and trace his route, as I proceed.

“ Ah ! there is Spain,” said a little listener. “ And there are the Canaries, to the west of it,” said another.

GOVERNESS.

They were now on a boundless and unknown ocean, far from the usual course of navigation. Many

of the sailors, who had been accustomed only to coasting voyages in the Mediterranean, already dejected and dismayed at the boldness of the undertaking, showed great distress, as if they were never more to behold the land. This want of courage in his men taught Columbus that he must prepare to struggle with many difficulties. He endeavoured to dispel the fears, and to silence the murmurs, of his dispirited seamen, and, in some measure, he succeeded.

“Columbus was a very brave fellow; and, I dare say, if he had had English sailors, they would have been brave too. Do go on, dear Governess; I long to hear of their reaching America.”

## GOVERNESS.

When about four hundred leagues to the west of the Canaries, he found the sea so covered with weeds, that it resembled a meadow of vast extent; and, in some places, they were so thick as to retard the motion of the vessels. This strange appearance occasioned new alarm amongst the sailors; they imagined they were now arrived at the utmost boundary of the navigable ocean; that these weeds would obstruct their further progress; and that they concealed dangerous rocks, or some large tract of land, which had sunk, they knew not how, in that place. Columbus endeavoured to persuade them that they ought to consider the weeds

as a sign of approaching land. Several birds were soon seen hovering about the ship, which is considered as a sign that land is not far distant; so the desponding crew resumed some spirit, and entertained fresh hopes.

When they had been at sea more than three weeks, and had proceeded far beyond what former navigators had deemed possible, all their prognosticks, drawn from the flight of birds and other circumstances, had proved fallacious; and their prospect of success appeared as distant as ever. From secret whispers or murmurings, the sailors now broke out into open mutiny. They agreed that Columbus should be compelled to relinquish his project,

and return to Spain: and, dreadful to relate, some of the more audacious proposed to throw him into the sea, believing that, upon their return to their native country, the death of an unsuccessful projector would excite little concern, and be inquired into with no curiosity. Columbus was fully sensible of his perilous situation; but, happily, he retained his presence of mind. He endeavoured to soothe and encourage his men, and, in some degree, restrained their violent conduct. But, at the expiration of thirty days from their losing sight of land, their fears revived with additional force; impatience, rage, and despair, appeared in their countenances. The officers, assembled tumultuously

upon deck, mingled threats with their expostulations, and required him instantly to tack about, and return to Europe. Our adventurer, finding nothing else would pacify them, solemnly promised that if, during the space of three days, no land should be discovered, he would then abandon his enterprise, and direct his course towards Spain. Nor did he hazard much in confining himself to so short a term. The presages of land were now so numerous and promising as to be exceedingly cheering. In addition to the usual prognosticks, one of the crew observed a cane floating on the water, which appeared to have been newly cut. Others of the sailors took up the branch

of a tree, with red berries, perfectly fresh.

The last day of the promised three was nearly expired, when Columbus, standing on the forecastle of the ship, observed a small light at a distance; and calling two of his officers, they all three saw it in motion, as if it were carried from place to place. A little after midnight, the joyful shout was heard, from the foremost ship, of "Land, Land." But they had been so often deceived by fallacious appearances, that, being slow of belief, many of the crew in anguish awaited the return of day. As soon, however, as morning dawned, all doubts were dispelled. From all the ships an island was seen, about two leagues

to the north, whose flat and verdant fields, well stored with wood, presented the appearance of a delightful country.

The crew instantly sang a hymn of thanksgiving, which they mingled with tears of joy, and transports of congratulation. They threw themselves at the feet of their heroick commander, and implored him to pardon their former ill conduct.

And here, my dear children, much and deeply as you appear to be interested, I must bid adieu to our adventurer for the present; and will conclude our evening's conversation with reciting a few lines, which allude to this part of the expedition, written by the poet Montgomery :

“The winds were prosperous, and the billows  
bore

The brave adventurer to the promised shore:  
Far in the west, arrayed in purple light,  
Dawned the new world on his enraptured  
sight.

. . . . .  
*How* felt Columbus, when, divinely fair,  
At the last look of resolute despair,  
The Hesperian Isles, from distance dimly  
blue,  
With gradual beauty opened on his view!”

## SEVENTH EVENING.

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*Columbus, continued.*

### GOVERNESS.

Last evening we left our adventurer highly gratified with the discovery of land, and, perhaps, I cannot do better than continue my account of him, from that period.

As soon as the sun arose, our seamen rowed towards the island with warlike musick, and other martial pomp. As they approached the coast, they saw it covered with a multitude of people, whose attitudes and gestures expressed won-

der and astonishment, at the strange objects that presented themselves to their view.

“I am very glad they have reached their journey’s end,” exclaimed a little rosy girl; “and, I hope, Columbus was more kindly treated by the natives than he had been by his sailors. But I like them rather better than I did, since they begged his pardon for their shameful conduct.”

#### GOVERNESS.

Columbus was the first who set foot in the New World, which he had discovered. He landed in a rich dress, carrying a naked sword in his hand; his men followed, and, kneeling down, kissed the ground, which they had so long desired to

see. They then, with great ceremony, took possession of the country, for the king of Spain. Whilst thus employed, they were surrounded by many of the natives, who seemed to gaze in silent admiration upon actions which they could not comprehend. The dress of the Spaniards, and the whiteness of their skin, appeared to excite much surprise.

“But, what colour were the natives?” asked one of the party.

GOVERNESS.

Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour; and their features appeared singular, but not disagreeable. At first, they were shy through fear; but, soon becoming familiar, they gladly received bells, glass,

beads, and other trifles, in exchange for provisions and cotton-yarn.

Our adventurers were much pleased with their reception; and, after spending a pleasant day on the island, they returned to their vessel in the evening.

“The account of Columbus’s giving presents to the natives,” observed one of our young friends, “puts me in remembrance of what Cowper remarks of Captain Cook:

‘He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,

‘The simple native of the new-found isle.’

Pray what is the name of the island which Columbus first discovered?”

GOVERNESS.

The islanders called it Guanahani, but Columbus gave it the

name of San Salvador. By referring to your maps, which I am pleased to observe you have laid upon the table, you will see it is one of the Bahama Islands, and that it is situated in about 24 degrees of North latitude, and 74 of West longitude.

The following day Columbus visited the coasts of the island ; and, from the universal poverty of the inhabitants, he was convinced it was not the rich country for which he sought. Having observed that many of the people wore small plates of gold, by way of ornament, in their nostrils, he eagerly inquired where they got that precious metal. They pointed towards the South, and made him comprehend, by

signs, that gold abounded in that quarter. Thither he immediately determined to steer his course; and, taking with him seven of the natives of San Salvador, to act as guides, again proceeded on his voyage.

After touching at several islands, he discovered a country, diversified with rising grounds, rivers, woods, and plains. This proved to be the island of Cuba; and a fine country, indeed, did it appear to be. Here he remained some time; but, still not meeting with gold, in sufficient quantities to gratify the avarice of his followers, or to satisfy the expectations of the Spanish court, and, having been told, by the natives, that gold was found in great-

er abundance in a country to the eastward, he proceeded on his voyage in that direction, and soon reached an island which the natives called Hayti. On this island Columbus bestowed the name of Hispaniola, in honour of the country by which he was employed. It ranks as the second in size among the West-India Islands. The inhabitants were much alarmed at the approach of the Europeans, and fled, in great consternation, towards their woods. Our adventurers, not willing to terrify these simple people, determined to pursue them, and convince them their fears were groundless: they succeeded in overtaking a female, who was precipitately flying from them ; and, treat-

ing her with great kindness, they dismissed her with a present of such toys as they thought would prove most acceptable to her countrymen. The trinkets, together with her account of these wonderful strangers, induced many of the natives to repair to the harbour, where they most readily exchanged their gold for bells, beads, pins, and such trifles.

It would occupy too great a portion of our time, my dear girls, were I to enter upon a detail of all the places which Columbus visited in rotation. I hope you will, before long, read Robertson's History of America, which is very instructive, and highly amusing; and which has, indeed, furnished the subjects

of our last two evenings' conversations.

"It must be entertaining," said one of our lively circle, "if it is all as much so as what we have already heard. How many years is it since San Salvador was discovered? I shall often think of Columbus, when I see that island on the map. How very much delighted he must have been, when he saw the light he mentions, moving about from place to place!"

GOVERNESS.

It was in the year 1492 that Columbus crossed the Atlantic the first time, and discovered many of the West-India islands: now, who can tell me how many years have since elapsed? To my younger pu-

pils I, of course, put this question.

“Oh! do let me tell,” said the very youngest; “that is something I *can* say. Let me see, 1492, and this is 1824; well, then, that was 332 years ago.

GOVERNESS.

Perhaps you imagine that, when our adventurer had, after his long voyage, set foot upon another earth, his hardships and dangers were ended; but this was far from being the case: by sea and land they still awaited him.

After spending some weeks in making discoveries, and acquainting himself with the manners of the people, and the productions of the countries he had discovered, with many other particulars, which he

knew would be acceptable to his sovereigns, he set sail for Europe.

This step he found absolutely necessary, both on account of the shattered condition of his vessels, and the discontented dispositions of his men, who expressed the utmost impatience to revisit their native country. Accordingly, on the 16th of January, 1493, they commenced their homeward voyage. Columbus took on board some of the natives, from the different islands he had discovered; and, besides the gold, which was the chief object of research, he had collected specimens of all the productions which were likely to become articles of commerce, as well as many unknown birds, and other natural curiosities.

The voyage was prosperous to the 14th of February, when the wind rose, and, continuing to blow with increasing rage, it, at length, terminated in a furious hurricane. Every thing that the naval skill and experience of Columbus could devise was employed to save the ships, but it appeared impossible to resist the violence of the storm; and, as they were far from land, their destruction was deemed inevitable. Great, indeed, was the distress of Columbus; for, besides the feelings which frequently agitate the human mind, in situations so awful, he had other sources of regret, peculiar to himself. He dreaded that all knowledge of the discoveries he had made should be

entirely unknown to mankind. He, therefore, retired to his cabin, and wrote, upon parchment, an account of the voyage which he had made, of the course he had taken, and of the situation and riches of the countries he had discovered. Having wrapped up his parchment in an oiled cloth, he enclosed it in a cake of wax; then putting it into a cask, carefully stopped up, he threw it into the sea, in hopes that some fortunate accident might preserve a deposit of such importance to the world.

“Oh! brave Columbus!” exclaimed an animated voice. “I hope he got safe to land, after all: but, how did the sailors behave in this danger?”

## GOVERNESS.

Not so courageously as their commander, I assure you. They entirely abandoned themselves to despair, which, of course, prevented their using proper efforts to save the vessel. At length, the winds gradually abated, the sea became calm, and, on the evening of the 15th, they discovered land. This proved to be the island of St. Mary, one of the Azores. Here he stayed a short time, to take in provisions, and then proceeded towards Spain. But, when near the end of his voyage, another storm arose, little inferiour to the former in violence.

After many difficulties, he succeeded in reaching the port of Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, and

surprised the Portuguese with the success of his scheme.

“ I know where Lisbon is,” said a little girl ; “ I remember learning, in my geography, that it is the capital of Portugal, and is built on seven little hills ; and that, some years ago, it was destroyed by an earthquake.”

GOVERNESS.

That is quite correct. It was in the year 1755 that this sad catastrophe occurred.

Sailing from Lisbon, Columbus, at length, on the 15th of March, once more anchored at the port of Palos, in Spain. As soon as the ship was discovered approaching, the inhabitants ran eagerly to the shore, in order to welcome their re-

lations, and to hear tidings of the voyage. When the prosperous issue was known, and when they saw the natives, the animals, and singular productions, brought from the countries which had been discovered, the effusion of joy was unbounded; the bells were rung; the cannon fired; and Columbus was received with royal honours. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the most flattering terms, invited him to repair immediately to the court, which was then at Barcelona.

His entrance into that city was conducted with great pomp. The natives of the countries he had discovered marched first, and, by their singular complexions, the peculiarity of their features, and their un-

couth finery, they appeared like men of another species. After these, were exhibited the various commodities of the newly-discovered countries, together with their curious productions. Columbus, himself, closed the procession, and attracted the eyes of all the spectators, who gazed with admiration on the extraordinary man, whose sagacity and fortitude had conducted them to the knowledge of a new world.

Ferdinand and Isabella received him, clad in their royal robes and seated on a throne, under a magnificent canopy. When he approached, they stood up, and, raising him as he kneeled to kiss their hands, commanded him to seat himself, and to give them a circumstan-

tial account of his voyage. He delivered it with much gravity and composure, and with that modest diffidence which characterizes persons of superiour minds, who, satisfied with having performed noble actions, court not vain applause by an ostentatious display of their exploits. Every mark of honour, that gratitude or admiration could suggest, was conferred upon our hero.

But, what pleased him most of all, was an order which he received to equip an armament of such force as might enable him, not only to take possession of the countries which he had already discovered, but, to go in search of those more opulent regions, which he still confidently expected to find.

“What number of persons accompanied Columbus on his first voyage?” asked one of the children.

GOVERNESS.

I believe the number, including all on board, was about one hundred; but they did not all return with him to Spain, as he left some of them in the island of Hispaniola.

One inducement to Columbus to leave some of his followers behind had been, that they might, by residing there, learn the language of the natives, examine the nature of the country, search for mines, and prepare for the commodious settlement of the colony with which he proposed to return. The men all approved of the design, and many voluntarily offered to be of the

number of those who should remain.

I must not omit to tell you of a little circumstance which strikingly shows the good disposition the natives of the West-Indies entertained towards the Spaniards. Columbus was sailing near the island of Hispaniola, with a fair wind and calm sea ; and, as he had not closed his eyes for 48 hours, he retired at midnight to take some repose, giving strict orders to the pilot not to desert his post for a moment. The man, however, disregarding the orders of his commander, left the helm to an inexperienced cabin-boy ; and the consequence was, that the vessel soon struck upon a rock. The violence of the shock awoke Columbus ; he instantly ran

upon deck, and found all in contusion and despair. He alone retained presence of mind. With great difficulty the crew were saved ; but, they were obliged to abandon their vessel, which became a complete wreck. As soon as the islanders heard of this disaster, they crowded to the shore, with their prince at their head ; and, instead of taking advantage of the distress in which they beheld the Spaniards, they lamented their misfortune with tears of sympathy. They put to sea a number of canoes, and assisted in saving whatever could be got out of the wreck ; and, by the united labour of so many hands, almost every thing of value was carried on shore. As fast as the goods were

landed, Guacanahari, the prince, took care of them himself. Next morning he visited Columbus, who was on board another of his vessels, and endeavoured to console him for his loss, by offering all that he possessed to repair it.

“That was noble, indeed,” exclaimed one of our juvenile friends. “Good Guacanahari! So Columbus had only two vessels to bring back with him.”

GOVERNESS.

He could not boast of two; for Pinzon, the captain of the other vessel belonging to this pitiful squadron, had ran off with it, they knew not where; and there is too much reason for believing that it was his intention to reach Spain

before Columbus; and, by his misrepresentations, to endeavour to secure to himself that glory which belonged to his commander. But his purposes were defeated; for Columbus descried the Pinta, after a separation of more than six weeks; and Pinzon then endeavoured to excuse himself, by pretending that he had been driven off by stress of weather. He separated himself again, during the first terrible storm which happened to the ships, on their return; but, happily, his endeavours to reach Spain before Columbus were again unsuccessful. Columbus arrived at Palos on the morning of the 15th of March, and Pinzon reached it in the evening of the same day.

“ But what hardships did he undergo after his return from his first voyage? I should have thought they had been all over then.”

GOVERNESS.

I see you are not willing to bid adieu to our subject; but, I believe, the ringing of the reading-bell will soon render it necessary. However, although our remaining minutes are but few, I will occupy them with relating a circumstance, which may serve as a specimen of the malevolence of his enemies.

When Columbus was in the West-Indies, after his third voyage from Spain, some persons at court, envious of the glory which he had so justly acquired, endeavoured to undermine his interest there; and,

unhappily, they so far succeeded, that a person was sent to Hispaniola, with a mandate from Ferdinand, ordering him to return to Spain, to answer the charges brought against him. Columbus was deeply affected with their ingratitude, but did not hesitate a moment as to the line of conduct he should pursue. He submitted to the will of his sovereigns with a respectful silence, and went directly to Bovadilla, the man who conveyed the order. He was immediately arrested, loaded with chains, and put on board a ship.

“Oh! how very dreadful!” said several of the children together. “Whatever had he done, that they could serve him in that manner?”

## GOVERNESS.

He deserved far different treatment; but, as I before remarked, the shameful and untrue insinuations of his enemies occasioned this ill usage.

Alonzo de Vallejo, the captain of the vessel, on board of which Columbus was confined, touched with sentiments of veneration and pity, as soon as he was clear of the island, approached his prisoner with great respect, and offered to release him from the fetters, with which he had been so unjustly loaded. “No,” replied Columbus; “I wear these irons in consequence of an order from my sovereigns. They shall find me as obedient to this as to their other injunctions.

By their command I have been confined, and their command, alone, shall set me at liberty."

The voyage to Spain was short, and Columbus, upon his arrival, threw himself at the feet of his sovereigns. He vindicated his conduct in a long discourse, producing the most satisfactory proofs of his own integrity; and evidence, no less clear, of the malevolence of his enemies. Ferdinand received him with civility, and Isabella with respect. They expressed sorrow for what had happened, and joined in promising him protection; but, notwithstanding this promise, and the degradation of Bovadilla, which soon followed, Columbus was not reinstated in his office of Viceroy of the West-Indies.

His great mind deeply felt this suspicion of his integrity. He had experienced unmerited abuse from the Spaniards, and he was exasperated to such a degree, that he could no longer conceal the sentiments which it excited. Wherever he went, he carried the fetters with which he had been loaded; they were constantly hung up in his chamber; and he requested that, when he died, they should be buried in his grave.

Exhausted with the fatigue and hardships which he had endured, and borne down with infirmities and grief, he ended his days, soon after, at Valladolid, in Spain, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

## EIGHTH EVENING.

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*The Ancient Britons, & British Remains.*

“MY dear Governess,” said one of our young friends, “we have been very much interested with the account of the discovery of America, and we are all unanimous in the desire, to know who was the discoverer of good old England: whoever he was, I think we have much to thank him for.”

GOVERNESS.

It has been the study of many learned men to throw light on this subject; but it still remains, and,

I suppose, will always remain, very obscure. It is most probable that England was first peopled by the Gauls, who lived in that part of the continent of Europe, known to us by the name of France. Britain was very little known to the rest of the world until the time of the Roman conqueror, Julius Cæsar, whose wish to extend the dominions of the empire inspired him with a desire to bring the Britons under the Roman yoke.

Many of you have read the history of your native country, I trust, with attention; and are acquainted with many particulars respecting the ancient Britons; but, perhaps, it may not be unproductive of pleasure to you, or of instruction

to my younger pupils, if we turn our attention, this evening, to the state of Britain, and the manners of its inhabitants, previous to the arrival of the Romans.

“ I believe it will be very pleasant to us all ; for, although some of us have read the History of England, I dare say, before the evening closes, we shall learn many particulars, of which we are now quite ignorant.”

GOVERNESS.

The ancient Britons, by which name those who lived before the island was conquered by the Romans are generally distinguished, are said to have been a tall and well-made race, and their constitution so good, that they frequently lived to

the age of 120 years. What little clothing they wore consisted of the skins of wild beasts; but a great part of their bodies, with their arms and legs, was entirely uncovered. On these parts they made incisions or cuts, in the shape of birds, trees, or animals; and rubbing themselves with the juice of a plant, called woad, it left a blue stain in these incisions, which could not be washed off. They usually lived in woods, in which they built their mud huts. These they covered with skins, boughs, or turf, and sometimes with straw. Their towns, or rather villages, were only a confused parcel of huts, placed at a little distance from each other, without any order, or distinction of

streets. Their usual food was milk, and flesh procured by hunting.

“ They seem to have been a very singular race of beings,” remarked an interested girl; “ and if Cæsar was the means of making things as comfortable as we now have them, I am very glad he visited Britain.”

GOVERNESS.

From the time of Julius Cæsar’s arrival in the island, things gradually acquired a different aspect; but, it was not for him to accomplish all that has been done: the lapse of many centuries, alone, could effect so great a change.

“ Many centuries, dear Governess? I am quite surprised to hear of *many* centuries; for I thought that one was a hundred years.

## GOVERNESS.

Certainly it is, my dear. Cæsar is said to have landed in Britain about 54 years before the birth of our Saviour; and, as it is now 1824 years since that great event took place, it must be, of course, 1878 years since the Romans first arrived in our island.

I will now proceed with my account of our ancestors; for many of my young friends, if I may judge by the expression of their countenances, are anxiously waiting for it.

“We are, indeed, very much interested,” replied a cheerful voice; “and many of us, at this end of the table, wish to be informed why the island received the names of Britain, Albion, and England.”

## GOVERNESS.

I am much pleased to observe your desire to obtain information; but, I fear I cannot give you a satisfactory answer to this question. There are a variety of opinions and conjectures on the derivation of the word, Britain. The most probable are, that its name was given to it by the Phœnicians, who, at a very early period, traded to the southern and western coasts of the island for tin, which the country produced in abundance. They therefore called it Barat-Anac, or the Land of Tin. This opinion, concerning the derivation of the word, Britain, is thought to receive some additional weight, from the consideration that the Greeks, who also traded with

the Britons, called the Scilly Islands, Cassiterides, which signifies the same as the Phœnician name of the country. Another conjecture is, that the Phœnicians called these islands Brithan, that is, Outer; because, as they lived on the coast of the Mediterranean, they had to pass the Straits of Gibraltar, and enter the Outer Sea, in order to arrive at Britain.

The origin of the word Albion is equally obscure; it is, however, generally considered to be derived, either from the Greek word, Alphos, whence comes the Latin, Albus, *white*; or from the Phœnician word, Alben, also signifying *white*. This name is supposed to have been given to the island, in allusion to its white cliffs.

England is a name of later date ; having derived its origin from the Saxons or *Angles*, who conquered the country, about five hundred years after the invasion of Julius Cæsar.

The Britons used, in war, a kind of chariot, which, with short scythes fixed to the end of the axletrees, inflicted terrible wounds ; spreading terour and devastation wherever they drove. Nor, while the chariots were thus destroying, were the warriors, who conducted them, unemployed. They darted their javelins against the enemy, ran along the beam, leaped on the ground, resumed their seats, stopped or turned their horses at full speed, and sometimes cunningly

retreated, to draw the enemy into confusion. Nothing can be more terrible than the idea of a chariot-eer thus driving furiously into the midst of dangers ; but, these machines seem to have been more dreadful than dangerous ; for they were quickly laid aside, when this martial people were instructed in the more regular arts of war.

“ But, dear Governess, what very odd people they seem to have been. What could induce them to live in woods, and such miserable huts, instead of building comfortable houses ?”

GOVERNESS.

At that early period, the natives of this isle were almost in a state of barbarism, and were unacquainted

with the art of building. Forests were then very thickly spread over the country; and it is related by one of our historians, that some of the ancient Britons lived in hollow trees. They had a great reverence for the oak; and, I suppose, it was in their decaying trunks they sought for shelter. There are still some people in the North of Scotland, and in some parts of Ireland, who have no other houses than mud huts, covered either with turf or straw, which are so very small, as scarcely to allow room for them to move about. But, I believe, they live very contentedly in these habitations, without going much abroad, except for the purpose of providing for their subsistence; and, satisfied

with milk and potatoes, give themselves no further trouble.

“But,” said a little girl, “how very droll the Britons must have looked, squeezed up in the trunk of a tree, with skins for their covering, and bodies all painted blue!”

GOVERNESS.

The Priests of the ancient Britons were called Druids, and they professed to take the care and direction of all religious matters. This class of men possessed various kinds of knowledge and literature, and were held in the greatest veneration by the rest of the people; their authority was absolute; and no public affairs were transacted without their approbation.

At the time in which the Romans

first visited Britain, the Druids were in the height of their glory ; but, they were soon very much reduced. The measures taken against them were extremely arbitrary and cruel ; for, the Romans wished to extirpate them entirely from the country. Their conquerors imagined, and, perhaps, not unjustly, that the Druids incited the people to acts of rebellion, and taught them that they ought to disdain submission to the foreigners. Paulinus, a celebrated Roman general, undertook the task of destroying the Druids, and subduing their adherents. Some precipitately retreated to Scotland and Ireland, which they considered out of the enemy's reach ; but, the greater number es-

caped to their favourite isle of Anglesea. Thither Paulinus pursued them; and the Britons endeavoured to obstruct his landing, on that last retreat of their superstition and liberties: the Priests and islanders were drawn up in order of battle, upon the shore, to oppose him. The Roman soldiers were, for some time, daunted at the appearance of a great number of Druidesses, who ran to and fro among the ranks of the army, having their hair dishevelled, and flaming torches in their hands. Such a sight confounded the Romans, and fixed them motionless on the spot, so that they received the first assault without making any opposition. But Paulinus, exhorting his troops to de-

spise the menaces of an absurd superstition, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, murdered the Druids, and destroyed their consecrated groves and altars.

“But, why was Anglesea their favourite island?” asked a little girl.

GOVERNESS.

Can my Mary Ann tell me where Anglesea is?

“Oh yes. It is an island, situated in the Irish Sea, to the north of Caernarvonshire.”

GOVERNESS.

The Druids had a great veneration for the oak; and, as these trees grew in profusion in that island, it became a favourite place of resort.

“ Poor Druids !” exclaimed one of the children ; “ their fate was, indeed, dreadful. But, dear Governess, what was the office of the Druidesses ?”

GOVERNESS.

These women were divided into three classes : the first were venerable females, who lived in a very sequestered manner, and who were held in high estimation by the people : the second class were principally engaged in assisting the Druids, in their different offices, and religious ceremonies : and the third class was composed of those who performed the servile offices of religion.

Over the Druids was placed an

Arch-Druid, whose seat was in the isle of Anglesea, where he is said to have lived in great splendour, for those times; and he had many of the most eminent of the order constantly around him.

In matters of religion, he was looked up to by the whole country. The dignity was elective; and, such a desire was felt to obtain the station, when a vacancy occurred, that civil wars sometimes ensued, before the contest for the office could be decided.

They had Academies, in which those who were designed to fill the office of Druids were educated. Here they were initiated into the principles of their religion; and a particular care was taken, that they

might always have an extreme reverence for their teachers. They were also required to make a solemn promise, that they would not divulge any of the mysteries of their profession.

Many of the religious rites of the Druids were of such a nature, that they would, in these days, thrill us with horror. Human victims constituted a part of their sacrifices; they were offered at noon and night. These poor creatures are supposed to have consisted principally of criminals, or prisoners taken in war. They were confined in idols of wicker-work, often made so capacious as to contain several victims at once; and, when thus enclosed, they were all consumed, by fire,

together. Thus, my dear children, you see the state of darkness in which our island was enveloped at that period ; and, I hope, you will endeavour to cherish right feelings of thankfulness for the blessings you enjoy, from living in a day, when the minds of men are more illuminated, and while such opportunities for your improvement, in best things, are so liberally afforded you.

“ But, dear Governess,” said one of the pupils, “ how could they raise Temples and Academies, if they did not understand the art of building ?”

GOVERNESS. Their Academies were, perhaps, built in the same rude manner as

their houses, only considerably larger. And their Temples were formed by an assemblage of huge stones, generally arranged in circles. Vestiges of some of these Temples may be traced in various parts of the country; and some of the other erections of the ancient Britons are still to be seen in considerable perfection.

“Do tell us where?” exclaimed one of the astonished group; “pray let us know more about them; I am sure it will afford all of us pleasure?”

GOVERNESS.

It is scarcely possible to go a day's journey, in many directions, without meeting with some of these vestiges of ancient times,—these silent but faithful monuments of men

and days that have long since passed away. Time will not admit of our entering fully upon this interesting subject this evening; and, perhaps, were we to do so, it would prove too abstruse for the generality of my hearers.

A few of the most conspicuous monuments of the Ancient Britons, are their Temples, Cromlechs or Altars, Barrows, Logan or Rocking Stones, and Pillars. I will endeavour to give you a short description of each of these; and when you are older, many of you will, perhaps, feel a pleasure in acquiring more information on the subject.

Their Temples are, as I said before, merely an assemblage of rude stones arranged in circles. There

is no perfect monument of this kind existing in Britain: that at Abury appears to have been the largest structure of that sort in the Island; but it is now nearly demolished. Stonehenge is comparatively in good preservation. Both these are in Wiltshire. The ruins of British Temples are also seen in Cornwall, and some other parts of the country.

The Cromlech appears to have been principally used as an Altar for sacrifice; it consists of one large flattish stone elevated on stone supporters. Cromlechs vary considerably in their construction and size: they are met with in different parts of Britain, and not unfrequently in some other parts of the world, where they have been erected by

the inhabitants in days that are long since passed.

Barrows are mounds of earth supposed to have been raised over the remains of some great personages. They occur in different parts of this country, but particularly in Wiltshire. Some of the Barrows of this Island are supposed to be the work of the ancient Britons; but others are attributed to the Romans.

“But,” remarked one of the elder pupils, “I suppose this must be mere conjecture; for how is it possible to distinguish between them?”

GOVERNESS.

It does not rest *wholly* on conjecture: some Barrows have been dug into by persons desirous of ascertaining what is buried in them.

It was formerly customary to deposit the arm of the deceased in his tomb with him ; and antiquaries are pretty well able to decide whether these are British or Roman. The bodies of deceased persons were generally burned by the ancients, while the ashes and bones were collected and deposited in an urn, and then placed in the tomb ; and, from the nature of the urns that have been discovered, we are able to discover to which of these people the deceased belonged. The British urn was rudely formed of unbaked clay, whilst the Roman was of baked clay, and was a much better finished piece of workmanship.

The largest Barrow in Britain is called Silbury Hill. It is situated

in Wiltshire, close to the side of the road leading from London to Bath. There are also many smaller ones scattered around it.

The custom of raising mounds over the remains of those who have been distinguished for their exploits has prevailed in various ages, and in various parts of the world.

Logan, or Rocking, Stones occur in several parts of the kingdom, as in Cornwall, Wales, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, &c. They consist of one immense stone, so nicely poised on the top of some other stone or rock, as to be turned round with the slightest touch, or pressure of the hand, at the same time that it is almost impossible to move them from their station. It is

conjectured that the Rocking-stone was used by the British Priests, who were also the judges of the people, as one method of deciding upon the innocence or guilt of those persons who were brought before them.

Mason, who has written a poem, in which he describes many of the customs of the ancient Britons, thinks that the Rocking-stone was used for this purpose; and exemplifies it in a very striking manner: he supposes two young men to be brought before the Druidical tribunal, on the charge of treason: on this occasion, the Arch-Druid thus addresses them:

“Thither youths

Turn your astonished eyes—behold yon huge

And unhewn mass of living adamant !  
Which, poised by magick, rests its central  
weight  
On yonder pointed rock. Fixed as it seems,  
Such are its strange and virtuous properties,  
It moves obsequious to the slightest touch  
Of him whose breast is pure ; but, to the  
traitor,  
Though a giant's prowess nerved his arm,  
It stands as firm as Snowden !”

The Arch-Druid then commands them, singly, to approach and touch the stone ; but, after an address so solemn, and from such a person, and with minds prepared by a superstitious dread of the secret and mysterious intelligence of this stone, it is highly probable that the guilty person would confess his crime, and not be hardy enough to make the attempt. But, as there would, pos-

sibly, be some daring enough to try, and as the stone would, of course, move just the same, whether an innocent or guilty person touched it, it was necessary that it should sometimes resist the hand, and remain immoveable. This was very easily effected by inserting a wedge, or even a small pebble, into the socket, in which the stone rested; and thus, perhaps, innocent persons were frequently made victims to the cunning of their designing Priests, who increased their influence by thus exciting the astonishment of the people.

At the Land's End in Cornwall, on the summit of a very lofty pile of rocks, is a very large stone of this kind; and, at no great distance from

it, a seat is cut in the rock, resembling an armed chair: this was, probably, the Arch-Druid's seat, on such occasions as I have already noticed.

“How cruel of the Arch-Druid to act so very unjustly,” said one of the children.

GOVERNESS.

There is too much reason to believe that the Druids, conscious of possessing a great ascendancy over the minds of the people, made a bad use of their power; and employed their superiour knowledge in endeavouring to blind the eyes of the people, instead of enlightening them. We must hope there were among them some more honourable characters, and that had it not been for the

promise with which they bound themselves, on entering the academies, they might have divulged some of the artful practices of their brethren.

“ Now, dear Governess,” said one of our young friends, “ may we hear something about the Pillars which the Britons erected. The more I hear, the more information I wish to gain. I believe our present conversation has not been unproductive of instruction to any of us.”

GOVERNESS.

The acquisition of a little knowledge often begets a desire for more ; and as long as this desire is restrained within proper bounds, it is highly praiseworthy.

The Pillars still existing in Bri-

tain are formed of one large stone, which appears to have been set up as a memorial of some great event. The erection of Pillars for this purpose has been very common in all ages, and in most parts of the world. The recollection of the Monument in London will readily occur to you; as most of you, I suppose, know that it was erected to commemorate the event of the great fire, which consumed a considerable part of the town, in the year 1666. You may yourselves have seen some of the modern pillars, which are not unfrequently met with, in the parks of noblemen and others.

The ancient British Pillars are often found near barrows or sepulchral mounds: but they sometimes

occur by themselves. There are three, of this last description, near Boroughbridge in Yorkshire.

Pillars and other monuments, which I have described, are mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures. In the 28th chapter of Genesis, we are informed that the patriarch Jacob, when on his flight from Beersheba to Haran, came to a certain place, and determined to tarry there all night; and he took of the stones of the place, and put them for his pillow. Here he laid himself down, and slept; and in the night he had a remarkable dream or vision; the accounts of which I recommend to your attentive perusal. In the morning he rose up early, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow,

and, setting it up for a pillar, poured oil upon the top of it.

In the 4th chapter of Joshua, we are also told, that the Israelites took up twelve stones from the bottom of Jordan, and set them up for a memorial. After they had done this, Joshua “ spake unto the children of Israel, saying, when your children shall ask their fathers, in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then shall ye let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land,” &c.

I have now, my dear girls, given you a short account of the principal of these British remains; but there are others of less note, and there are also many particulars relating to those I have named, which, when

you are older, you will be better able to understand.

Although these works are generally and, I believe, justly attributed to the ancient Britons, it is but fair to tell you that there are persons who dissent from this opinion, at least with respect to *some* of these relicks of antiquity.

Here we must conclude our conversation; and, having given some information respecting the benighted state of our predecessors, I can but express the earnest desire I feel that my beloved charge may profit from what they have heard, and learn justly to appreciate the many blessings which are poured around them.

THE END.

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